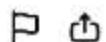




Chapter 28



The house feels different without the kids. Too quiet, too full of possibility, charged with something that's been building for weeks.

Lysander picked them up an hour ago for a weekend at his place—promised them movies, pizza, the kind of uncle spoiling that makes them shriek with joy.

They left in a chaos of packed bags and excited chatter, Phoenix demanding he let her stay up late, Orion asking about his game collection, Luna hugging me tight before whispering "Have fun with Kieran" like she knows exactly what this weekend means.

Now it's just us. Alone in the house we're building together, no interruptions, no pack emergencies, no children who could walk in at any moment.

I've been Luna for a month. Survived political challenges, restructured pack hierarchy, proven myself to wolves who thought I'd fail. But I haven't had a single moment to just be with my mate without something pulling us apart.

Kieran's been patient. Almost too patient. But I feel the tension radiating off him every time we're alone for five minutes before someone needs something. Feel the mate bond pulling taut with denied need, humming under my skin like a live wire.

I find myself in our bedroom—properly ours now, not just his space I'm borrowing. Our clothes mixed in the closet, my books on the nightstand, photos of the kids on the dresser. Evidence of a life we're building.

The door opens behind me. I don't need to turn to know it's him—

the mate bond flares the second he enters, recognition that's cellular, fundamental.

"They're gone?" His voice is rough, careful.

"For the whole weekend." I turn to face him and my breath catches.

He's leaning against the doorframe, already shirtless, jeans riding low on his hips. The way he's looking at me makes my skin feel too tight.

"No kids," he says slowly, pushing off the frame to move closer. "No pack. No interruptions." Another step. "Just us."

The air between us thickens, electric. I'm already moving when he closes the distance, backing me against the wall with his body. His hands frame my face and for one heartbeat we just stare at each other.

Then his mouth crashes into mine and thought evaporates.

This isn't gentle. Isn't asking permission or building slowly. This is weeks of restraint shattering, four weeks of stolen kisses and interrupted moments, a month of being Luna and mate and mother without being able to just be his.

His tongue demands entry and I give it, gasping against him as his body pins me to the wall. Every point of contact burns. The mate bond flares so bright I feel dizzy with it.

"Do you have any idea," he growls against my mouth, "how hard it's been? Watching you lead the pack, seeing you take control, knowing you're mine but not being able to—"

His hand slides up my thigh, under my dress, and I arch into him.

"Bedroom," I manage between kisses. "Now."

He lifts me and my legs wrap around his waist instinctively. He's walking

us toward the bed, mouth never leaving mine, hands everywhere. I'm pulling at his belt, desperate for skin, needing contact with a hunger that terrifies and thrills me.

We hit the mattress and he comes down over me, settling between my thighs with delicious weight. His mouth traces down my throat, pausing at the mate mark that brands me as his.

"Mine," he breathes against it, and the bond flares.

"Yours." My hands fist in his hair. "Always yours."

My dress disappears—when did he undo the zipper? His hands are everywhere, mapping, claiming, memorizing. He kisses down my collarbone, lower, and when his mouth closes over my breast I cry out.

"I've wanted this since the bond completed," he murmurs against my skin. "Wanted you alone, no stopping, nothing between us. Wanted to taste every inch of you without rushing."

His mouth continues its journey south and my back arches off the bed.

"Kieran—"

"Let me worship you." His hands grip my hips, holding me still. "Let me show you what you are to me."

When his mouth finds the apex of my thighs, the pleasure is so intense I see stars. The bond amplifies everything—I feel his satisfaction as he tastes me, feel his desperate need to please me, feel the possessive hunger driving him.

"Please." I'm begging now, hands fisted in the sheets. "I need—"

"I know what you need." He rises over me, positioning himself. "I feel everything you feel, remember? Every want, every ache, every desperate need."

He enters me in one slow thrust and the bond detonates. Not just physical pleasure—though that's overwhelming, exquisite—but spiritual connection that fuses us together. I feel his pleasure echoing in my body, feel his possessive joy and desperate love and absolute certainty that I'm his.

"God," he groans, buried deep, forehead pressed to mine. "You feel perfect. Like you were made for me."

"I was." The words come out breathless. "The bond knew. Always knew."

He starts moving, slow and deliberate, watching my face with that intense focus. Every thrust sends pleasure rippling through the bond, amplifying until I can't tell his pleasure from mine.

"Mine," he growls, pace increasing. "My mate. My Luna. Forever mine."

"Yes." I'm gasping, nails digging into his shoulders. "Yours. Only yours."

The rhythm builds, desperate and perfect. His mouth finds my throat, teeth grazing the mate mark, and I shatter. The orgasm tears through me with the bond amplifying it, making it endless, overwhelming, perfect.

He follows with my name on his lips, and I feel his release through the connection like it's happening to both of us simultaneously.

We collapse together, breathing hard, covered in sweat and trembling with aftershocks.

"We're not done," he says after a moment, voice rough.

"What?"

He shifts, already hardening inside me again. "The bond demands more. Needs complete claiming. Every way. Until we're marked and exhausted

and absolutely completed."

My body responds before my mind catches up, heat flooding me again.
"Then take me again."

This time he goes slower. Turns me beneath him, kisses every inch of my back, my shoulders, the nape of my neck. Worships me with hands and mouth until I'm trembling, begging.

When he enters me from behind, the angle hits something that makes me cry out. He sets a slow, torturous rhythm, one hand in my hair, the other on my hip.

"Beautiful," he breathes. "So damn beautiful like this. Submitting to me, trusting me, letting me claim you completely."

The words combined with the slow, deep thrusts push me toward another edge. I'm gasping his name, pushing back against him, desperate for more.

"That's it," he encourages. "Take what you need. Use me. I'm yours as much as you're mine."

The acknowledgment—that this isn't just submission but mutual claiming—sends me over. I come apart sobbing his name, and he follows, marking my shoulder with his teeth as he finds his own release.

We don't stop. Can't stop. The bond drives us, demanding more, needing complete satiation. He takes me again after that, desperate and fast, hands gripping my thighs as he drives into me with urgent need.

And again, in the shower, my back against tile while water streams over us both and the bond sings satisfaction.

By the time morning light filters through windows, we're tangled in

ruined sheets. The room reeks of sex and mate bond satisfaction. My body aches in the best way, covered in marks from his mouth, his hands, his teeth.

He traces patterns on my spine, gentle now, worshipful. "This is what I wanted since I was seventeen," he murmurs against my hair. "You. Just you. Exactly like this."

I turn to face him, trace the mate mark on his throat with careful fingers. "We're bonded now. Forever."

"Forever." He captures my hand, brings it to his lips, kisses my palm with reverence. "And forever isn't long enough."

The mate bond hums satisfied between us, finally satiated after weeks of restraint. This is what we needed—not Luna and Alpha heir, not mother and father, just mates claiming each other completely.

"We should sleep," I murmur, though I don't want to move.

"Later." His hand slides down my hip, pulling me closer. "We have all weekend. And I'm nowhere near done with you yet."

The promise in his voice makes heat flood through me again.

"Insatiable."

"For you? Always." He rolls me beneath him, settles between my thighs with that possessive look. "You made me wait a month. I'm making up for lost time."

When he enters me again, slow and perfect, I realize I'm not arguing.

We have all weekend. And forever after that.

End *of*