

Broken by one, claimed by three novel

c 10

10 CORA The doctor at Alpha Rowan's pack never treated me when I got sick or injured . He claimed that he knew nothing about human illnesses and that I was not important enough for him to learn about them . Whenever I got injured , Mom would treat my wounds . And whenever I got sick , they had to take me to town to see a human doctor . But the doctor sitting in front of me , examining my wrist was nothing like the other doctors I had been to .

She was gentle as she touched parts of my skin and put me at ease by asking me numerous questions . " Not broken , " she muttered as she lowered my arm to my lap . " But you've made the sprain worse . " Her eyes darted over to Keiran who stood leaning against the wall . " I gave you orders and I expect them to be followed , alpha . " " It won't happen again , Olive . " " Better not , " she muttered as she stood . " I'll see if I can find you a brace to wear to limit movement .

You also need to try to keep weight off of it otherwise you'll risk another re - injury . " " Thank you . " Olive nodded . " These are for the pain and swelling . " She placed a packet of pills down on the bedside table . " Two times a day but make sure that you eat before you drink them . " Turning , she placed everything back in the doctor's bag and then straightened to smile down at me . " Welcome to the pack Cora , I hope that you will be happy here .

" I smiled at her and watched as she made her way out of the room , but not before stopping to glare at Keiran and once more scold him for letting me leave the bed . When she was gone , silence surrounded us . I silently studied him as I waited for him to say anything . He looked a lot more troubled than he had been a few minutes ago when I last saw him . Letting out a low sigh , he straightened and walked around the bed to take a seat in the chair .

i " Did your parents ever try to find your biological parents ? " he asked softly . I blinked at him . That was the last question I expected him to ask me . " No. " " Why ? " " Why should they have ? " I questioned . " They found me abandoned at the side of the road . If they really wanted me , they wouldn't have left me there to die . " " I ... " He ran a hand through his hair . " I'm trying to make sense of things , Cora . Don't get mad at me for asking questions . " " I'm not mad at you !

" I exclaimed . " I'm mad at them for throwing me away like a piece of trash . " " You don't know why they did it , " he growled. " You don't know whether your mother brought you into this world under difficult circumstances . Maybe she was too young to care for you . Maybe your dad was an abusive bastard . Maybe she expected you to have a better upbringing if someone else raised you . " I glared at him . " If she wanted that then why didn't she take me to an orphanage ?

She left me in the middle of nowhere ! " Too agitated to sit still , I got up and started pacing . How could he try to justify that woman ? When she left me there I had nothing but a thin blanket wrapped around me to protect me from the cold . I could have been there for a few days before Mom and Dad found me . I could have been killed by a

hungry animal . There were a lot of things that could have happened to a newborn baby at the side of the road . " Cora .

" Keiran gripped my arm and spun me around to face him . " I'm just trying to figure out where you came from . ' " It seems more like you're trying to justify that woman's actions , " I hissed at him . He shook his head . Leading me back over to the bed , he pushed me down on it and then took a seat next to me . " Axel has reason to believe that you might not be human . " I laughed , but the laughter died down when Keiran just continued to watch me .

I realized with shock that he was being serious . " I can't change forms or have any special abilities . I'm sure I would have known by now if I was anything but human , " I told him . " That's just the thing , " he muttered . " Some shifters don't start shifting until they hit puberty . There could be a delayed reaction due to drugs used or your wolf maturing more slowly than your human body is growing . " A scoff fell from his lips .

"I could think of a hundred reasons why a shifter doesn't or can't shift . " " I'm human , " I said with a finality I hoped he understood . There were times when I wished to be like them , sure . I sometimes hated that I was so weak , but I had learned to accept that . He wanted me to believe that I might be something I certainly wasn't . I didn't want to get my hopes up only to have it crushed . " I didn't bring this up to upset you , " Keiran said softly .

" I wanted you to know that I'm going to look into your past and see if I might be able to find your biological parents . " 1/3 10 CXORA +25 Bonus " Why ? " He stood and

frowned down at me . " Because I need answers . We need answers and I know deep down you want answers too . " I shook my head . " Only I know that Olivia and Nate weren't your real parents . " His gray eyes darted over my face . " I won't tell anyone about it or what I will find out about your real parents .

" " I don't want to know about them . " " Maybe someday , " he muttered . I continued to glare at him until he was out of the room . There were times when the bullying got so bad that I wished that I knew them , that I knew why they had deserted me and left me to live through hell every day . But I had learned to be grateful that I was still alive and that I at least had a family . Doubt started to set in as I continued to stare at the door .

I really couldn't imagine myself being anything other than human . Shaking my head , I reached for the pills . The throbbing in my wrist was getting harder to ignore . I drank two pills and then crawled into bed . Maybe when I woke up it would all have just been a dream . *** Only it wasn't . I didn't wake up in my old bedroom back home . But I did wake up to a strange girl in my bedroom packing away the clothes Keiran brought me . !

Sitting up , I rubbed the sleep from my eyes and frowned as I waited for the girl to notice that I was awake . Why was someone in my room while I was sleeping ? " I didn't wake you , did I ? " she questioned . " I've been working as silently as I could . " " You didn't , " I muttered . My eyes darted over her . She was short and petite with brown curly hair and fair skin that had a golden tan . I noticed that she wore a blue armband around her thin wrist with a strange symbol on it .

" My name's Blue , " she said softly . " Blue ? " I blinked at her in surprise . Until she turned to look at me , I instantly understood how she got her name . Bright sea blue

eyes stared at me . " Wow , " I breathed before I could stop myself . She smiled . " I get that reaction a lot , but mostly people just stare at me . " " Sorry . Your eyes are beautiful , " I told her . " So are yours . " Colour flooded my cheeks . " Thank you . " With another small smile , she turned back to her task .

" You really don't have to do that , " I said as I stood . I swayed when the room started spinning . Dropping back onto the bed , I squeezed my eyes closed and sucked in a few deep breaths . " Are you okay ? Do you want me to go get alpha ? " " No ! " I instantly denied . " I just got up too fast . " She remained silent but I could feel her eyes burning into my back as I headed towards the bathroom .

Closing the door , I leaned back against it for a few seconds before I made my way over to the toilet . Once I was done , I splashed my face with some cold water and blinked at my reflection . I looked better despite the bruise on my throat . When I entered the bathroom again , it was to find Blue still busy with the clothes . " Blue , you really don't have to do that . " " It's no trouble , " she said . " Besides , it's my job . " " Job ? " I questioned in confusion .

2/3 10 COPA +25 Bonus " Every omega has a job to do in the pack . We do what we're good at and organizing things is one of my specialties . " " Omega ? " Blue was silent for a few seconds as she studied me . " You really don't know much about us , do you ? " " No , " I admitted . " Okay , so an Omega is the lowest member in the pack . Some packs believe them to be the rusts and other packs believe that they should be cherished like here . " She paused to place some shirts in the closet .

" Alpha Keiran makes sure that we're taken care of . " " Why are you ... ? " I trailed off , scared of offending her . Blue smiled at me . " I can shift but my wolf is smaller than average . I tend to run and hide when faced with danger . Hate being placed in the spotlight of having to confront someone . " " Oh . " " The other members considered omegas are people like me and the elders . " She paused , giving me a once - over . " I guess you kinda fall under the category because you're human .

" I bit my lip . An omega . Dad had briefly mentioned the ranks in a pack , but I honestly hadn't been paying attention to him . " When are you starting school ? " She pointed to the corner . I turned and stared at the stationary in the chair along with a new school bag . " I'm not sure , " I muttered . " Do you have your schedule yet ? " she asked . I shrugged . Placing the clothes down , she walked over to the chair and picked up the papers on top of the pile .

Humming , she searched through the papers until she stopped at one . " We have a few classes together . I can show you around if you want ? " It was on the tip of my tongue to deny her , but I decided against it and nodded instead . " I'd really appreciate it , thank you . " Giving me another bright smile , she started packing the clothes again . " Can I help you with something ? " She waved my offer away . " Get back into bed , " she ordered .

" I don't want the alpha riding my ass for making you work when you're supposed to be resting . " My lips parted but the argument died down when she glared at me . Letting out a sigh , I crawled back into bed and silently watched her . " So , I don't usually pay any attention to the rumours in the pack , but this one is super interesting . " Blue

paused and turned around to look at me . " They're saying that Ryder claimed you as his mate in front of half the pack . "

c11

CORA School . +25 Bonus My stomach twisted with nausea as I made my way down the stairs a week later . The doctor had given me the all - clear to go to school much to my disappointment . When I entered the kitchen it was to find only Keiran sitting at the table . My eyes darted around , taking in the various dishes . " I wasn't sure what you like , " he muttered , standing . " You cooked ? " I breathed , wide - eyed . He raised an eyebrow . " Yes , you didn't think I could ?

" " No , " I told him honestly . " Dad couldn't cook . It was always me or Mom that cooked for him . " Keiran pulled a chair out for me and then took a seat again . Placing a plate down in front of me , he gestured to the other plates . " Help yourself . " " Thank you . " I grabbed a slice of toast and took a small bite . I was too nervous to actually eat . But he went through all the trouble to cook and I wanted to show him that I appreciated it .

" It's important for a male to know how to take care of his mate which includes cooking . " He took a bite of bacon and slowly chewed it as he watched me . " Where's June ? " I asked . " She's having breakfast with some friends . " " Oh . " I took another bite of toast . " Mom doesn't live here , " he said softly . " She wanted to stay to make sure that you

settle in . " " That was very nice of her . " I had a feeling that June didn't like me very much despite her trying to be nice .

There was just something about her I couldn't explain . During the few conversations we had , she never made me feel so much at ease as Keiran and Blue . Axel hadn't been around much and I haven't seen or heard Ryder since the incident in town . I wanted to know where they were , but I was too scared to ask Keiran about them . He never mentioned them whenever we talked . " I'm going to be honest with you , " he said softly .

" When Rowan called to ask me if I was willing to take you in , I organized for you to stay at the pack house . " " Pack house ? " I tilted my head slightly as I frowned at him . " It's a big house in town where most of the youth stay . It's close to school and most shops . " Keiran cleared his throat . " Your room is still available if you want to live there . " " How does it work ? " I asked him .

" I know that there was a pack house in my old pack but I avoided it unless Alpha Rowan wanted to see me . " " It used to be an old hotel . We made a few changes which included adding a few more rooms . " Taking a sip of his coffee , he slowly lowered his cup back to the table before he continued . " Everyone has their own room , but the kitchen , gym , living room , and dining rooms are community rooms . Those rooms are open to everyone .

There's a place to do your laundry in the basement or you can take it to the laundromat in town . » " It sounds ... " I trailed off , unable to find a word to use . Keiran smiled . " I take it you would rather stay here ? " I instantly nodded until I realized that I might be

invading his privacy . Before I could comment on it , he continued . " Ryder spends most of his time at the pack house , Axel is usually only active at night , and sometimes I'm too busy to come home .

You'll mostly have the house to yourself . " " I don't want to be- " You're not , " he interrupted . Toast finished , I reached for a glass and filled it with some juice . " Do you know how to drive ? " I shook my head . " I'll give you a ride to school , " Keiran offered . " Most of us prefer to get around in wolf form but there are some who use the cars to get from point A to B.

" " I can walk , " I told him , although driving around sounded much better because there would be fewer eyes on me . 1/3 A CORA +25 Bonus " If you want , I can teach you how to drive this weekend , " he offered softly . I bit my lip as I stared down at my plate . It would be so easy to accept his offer . I wanted to and I almost did , but then I thought about the car . I didn't have a car and I was sure that he would want to buy me one . " You're thinking too much , " Keiran said softly .

" You can use my truck any time you want . I won't expect any payment or whatever you're thinking about . " " I ... " Leaning closer , Keiran took hold of my hand and squeezed it . For a moment all he did was stare at me . " I know this is a lot different than what you're used to . We don't really know each other , and my pack is a lot different than Rowan's pack . I want you to know that you shouldn't be afraid to ask for what you want or what you need .

" I swallowed the sudden lump in my throat . " You don't have to hide because you're different , " he said softly . " Embrace it . " " I'm scared , " I whispered , tears burning my eyes . Keiran scooted his chair closer and reached up to cup my cheek . He stroked my cheekbone with his thumb as his eyes darted over my face . " I know . " His lips curled up in a small smile that instantly faded again . " Change is scary . I remember when I first took over as alpha .

I didn't know what to do , I was constantly messing up . But I had people to help me adjust . " " How long have you been alpha ? " I questioned . His words were kind , and I knew that he meant it , but if he continued , I might just embarrass myself by bursting into tears . Letting out a sigh , he sat back and frowned at the wall . " A long time , " he finally answered . " So long that I really can't remember doing anything other than being the leader of this pack . " " Oh .

" My eyes darted over him . He was fit and muscular and there was not a sign of wrinkles on his face . His skin had a golden tan that made it clear that he spent most of his time under the hot sun . My uncle was one hot alpha . Colour flooded my cheeks as soon as that thought flashed through my mind . " If you're finished with your breakfast , we should get going otherwise you're going to be late . " He stood without waiting for a reply and started clearing the dishes .

I left him in the kitchen and headed into the living room to make sure that all the books were in my bag . " Here , " Keiran muttered as he held a piece of paper out towards me . " Your locker number and combination . " He paused . " You can leave your books in it unless you get homework or assignments to do . " " Oh . " How much homework were

we going to get ? How are the teachers going to act toward me ? Will they treat me any differently ? " Ready ?

" I nodded even though I was far from ready . Keiran led the way out of the house and then to the truck parked in the driveway . I didn't remember seeing it there before or hearing him pulling it out of the garage . Then again , I hadn't done much exploring since I got here . " Have you talked to Lucas yet ? " I asked . Keiran opened the door and held a hand out to help me into the truck . Walking around the front , he climbed in and started the truck before he answered me .

" They are still searching through the debris . " " Oh . " My shoulders slumped . I was hoping that they would have found something savable . The cabin wasn't that big so I didn't understand what was taking them so long . ' Do you want me to pick you up after school or do you think you'll be able to find your way back home ? " I stared out the window as we drove . It should be easy to find the house after school . " How does the brace feel ? " My eyes dropped to my wrist . " Fine .

" 2/3 +25 Bonus It felt weird and uncomfortable at first , but I had gotten used to it . As the doctor said , it limited movement and helped me keep weight off it . Half an hour later , we reached the school . I stared up at the building and then at the kids lingering around . " You know where to reach me if you need anything , " Keiran said softly . " Enjoy your day . " I forced a smile onto my lips as I slid out of the truck . Heads instantly turned .

Lowering my eyes , I stared at my feet as I hurried into the building . There were a lot of things I didn't know about high school . The guidebook Keiran got me covered a few

basic things , but it still made me feel out of my element . I made a mental list of things I needed to do before the first period started . I was so lost in thought that I wasn't really paying any attention to what I was doing until I bumped into somebody . My feet slipped on the tiles .

I gasped when my wrist was grabbed , and my body was jerked against another before I could fall . I blinked at the face inches from mine . Familiar golden brown eyes locked with mine . " R - Ryder . "

c 12

RYDER " Your brother adopted a human . " " I heard , " I muttered absentmindedly as I glanced around . " Have you met her ? " Dale questioned . " No , " I lied . He already knew the answer . The whole fucking pack knew about it . Those who didn't see it happen , already heard about it . My mate was the new human my brother adopted . Olivia's daughter . I clenched my teeth and ran a shaky hand through my hair . My head ached , my body was sore and my wolf was still agitated .

We hadn't seen our mate in a week . Until this morning . She had run from me the moment she realized who she had run into , and I hadn't seen her since . I was dying to get another whiff of her . But Keiran had warned me to keep my distance . I thought that with my heat over , he would allow me to seek her out . She belonged to me . And apparently to him . As well as Axel . I growled , gripping the table tightly . My claws dug into the wood which made people turn to look at me .

I sneered at them , instantly making them hurry away . " What the hell is your problem , man ? " Dale questioned . " Nothing , " I growled . Finally , my eyes locked on her when she entered the cafeteria . She was still carrying her bag , but she had a few books clutched to her chest . Her head was down , and shoulders up . I hated how vulnerable it made her look . She should be walking with her head high .

" It looks like she already had a run - in with Kelsey , " Dale muttered , nodding to the left .. I followed his gaze and watched Kelsey and her minions make their way towards an unsuspecting Cora . They stopped a few feet away and waited . A second later , Cora jerked to a stop . She slowly raised her head and frowned at Kelsey . " " Hi ! " Kelsey greeted with a little wave . " H - Hi . " " You're new here , right ? " She tilted her head to the side and silently studied Cora .

" It's easy to tell . Your style is really different . " " Thank you . " " It wasn't a compliment . " Cora gave her a sweet smile . " I know , but I decided to take it as a compliment instead of an insult . I'm very comfortable with what I'm wearing . Are you ? " " Excuse me ? " Kelsey gasped . Lowering her head , Cora slowly trailed her eyes over Kelsey . Her frown deepened . " Maybe you should look into buying bigger clothes .

Your shirt seems a bit too small or maybe you got a boob job and forgot to buy the right size clothes ? " " You bitch ! " Kelsey snarled . I was on my feet in a second and hurrying towards them , but it was too late . The slap echoed around the room . Loud gasps were heard before the idiots started chanting ' Fight , fight , fight . ' Kelsey was reaching for Cora with a clawed hand . Snarling , I gripped her wrist and pushed her away . Satisfaction filled me when she fell on her ass .

With her eyes wide and lips parted , she blinked at me in shock " You should know better , Kelsey , " I growled , 4/4 RYDER +25 Bonus " It's none of your business ! " She stumbled to her feet and took a step towards Cora , but I blocked her path . " Kelsey , " I growled softly . " If you touch her again , I'll have you thrown in the dungeon . " " Fuck you , Ryder ! That bitch just insulted me . " " And you deserved it .

" Taking a step towards her , I gripped her wrist to jerk her away from Cora . " This is your first and last warning . Stay the fuck away from her or else . " Blue was hovering next to Cora when I turned around . Kneeling in front of her , I reached out to grip her chin so I could tilt her head back to get a look at the damage the bitch caused . Another growl fell from my lips . Her skin already had a dark bruise forming .

Blue was busy pinching the bridge of her nose to try and stop the bleeding . My eyes locked with Cora's teary eyes . " Can you move your jaw ? " She blinked at me and then slowly moved her jaw , but not without wincing . " You can't be serious , Ryder ! " Kelsey exclaimed . " You're threatening me , your girlfriend for a fucking human . " I sighed and slowly stood . Sucking in a deep breath , I turned to look at Kelsey . " Let's clear this up so everybody can hear .

" I glanced around and raised my voice when I spoke again . " Kelsey and I have never and will never be together . I have not kissed her or fucked her and I never will even if my life depended on it . " My wolf rose to the surface . " Let this be a warning . If anyone of you lays a hand on my mate , I'll fucking kill you . " Spinning around , I hoisted Cora up into my arms despite Blue's protest and walked out of the room .

I was aware of Dale following close by and the little omega struggling to keep up without long strides . Cora groaned . " This is a new shirt and now it's got blood all over it . " I looked down at her in amusement . She had a hand pressed to her bleeding nose but it wasn't doing much to stop the bleeding . Blood was dripping everywhere . I changed direction and headed toward the bathroom instead . Dale held the door open for me .

Lowering Cora to her feet , I spun her around and opened the tap . " Lean forward , " I ordered softly . She did as I said , her hand dropping away to allow the blood to drip into the sink . " Wet some towels and hold it against her nose while you pinch it , " Blue ordered a little breathlessly . She dropped Cora's bag and books onto the floor close by and then proceeded to grab paper towels and wet them .

I pushed her hand aside and took the towels from her to hold them against Cora's nose as she instructed . The bathroom remained silent with the only sound filling it being the running water . Whenever someone entered the room , Dale was quick to chase them out . My head dipped lower so I could brush my nose against her hair . I sucked in a deep breath and bit back a growl . She smelt sweet ... fucking perfect . When I opened my eyes , they locked with Cora's in the mirror .

My lips twitched as I watched colour flood her cheeks . Swallowing , she tried to move away , but she had nowhere to go . I had her caged in between the faucet and my body . " We should get her to the nurse's office so she can take a look at her face , " Dale suggested softly . " We should , " I agreed , but I didn't move . " I'm f - fine . " I raised an eyebrow . Forcing my eyes away from hers , I pulled the towels away and inspected the bruise on her cheek .

" Open your mouth wide and move your jaw for me , " I ordered softly . She frowned . " It's to make sure that your jaw is not dislocated , fractured , or broken , " Blue piped up . " Kelsey used enough force in her hit to have caused you some serious 2/4 12 RYDER +25 Bonus damage . No offense , but your human bones are so much weaker than- " " It's the same , " Dale interrupted her . " We're part human . Our bodies are the same . " " No , it's not , " Blue argued .

Letting out a sigh , I turned my focus back to my mate . She slowly opened her mouth and did as I instructed . Aside from a slight wince when she moved , nothing seemed to be broken . " Does anything else hurt ? " I asked her . " Besides my ego , " she muttered . " No. " My lips twitched . " Let's get the blood cleaned up . " Spinning her around , I gripped her hips and lifted her onto the counter . I removed the bloody paper towels and dropped them in the bin before grabbing some clean ones .

Cora sat completely still as I cleaned the blood from her face , neck , and then her hand . With the blood cleared away , I took in the damage Kelsey's slap had caused . Her nose and cheek were bruised badly . It stood out starkly against her pale skin . " I can use some make - up to cover up the worst of it , " Blue offered as she moved closer . Dale appeared at our other side , taking in the damage . " Shit , who knew one slap could cause so much bruising ? " he muttered under his breath .

I growled at him . He shrugged as he stumbled back. " What ? It's just an observation . " Cora's eyes dropped to her shirt . It had blood droplets all over the front . I didn't like the look in her eyes or the slump of her shoulders . It was my duty as her mate to make her

feel better . " Out , " I ordered Dale and Blue . " Now . " Dale hesitated a second before he gripped the omega's arm and pulled her out of the bathroom.

I waited until the door closed behind him before I took a small step back and gripped the hem of her shirt . She froze , wide eyes snapping up to mine . " W - what are you doing ? " she breathed . " Getting you a clean shirt . " Her hands wrapped around my wrist . " I don't ... " " Cora , I already told you that you're mine . " I leaned closer . " Sooner or later I am going to see you naked . " The colour in her cheeks deepened . " I don't see a clean shirt .

" Smirking , I took a small step away from her and pulled my shirt off . Placing it down next to her , I took a step closer again and gripped the hem of her shirt . " There's your clean shirt . Arms up , sunshine . " She hesitated and then slowly raised her arms . I tried to be respectful , but I was only a man . My eyes dropped . I sucked in a shaky breath . Her tits were a perfect handful and the black bra really stood out against her pale skin . My eyes slipped lower to her thin waist .

I froze , fighting a growl . " What happened ? " Cora swallowed loudly . " I - I bumped into a table edge . It's nothing , I'm fine . " " Kelsey did it . " It wasn't a question because I already knew the answer . " What else did she do ? " " Nothing ! " My eyes snapped up to hers . It was clear that she wasn't going to tell me and that was fine because I would find out on my own . Grabbing my shirt , I pulled it over her head . " Please don't , " she pleaded . " I asked Keiran as well .

Don't make special rules for me . " Closing the space between us , I cupped her cheeks and leaned closer until inches separated our lips . " This is not making special rules , " I growled . " This is me protecting my mate . "

c 13

AXEL AXEL +25 Bonus Hunger was gnawing at my stomach . It made it impossible for me to sleep even though my body and brain were beyond tired . I needed sleep . The fact that her scent filled nearly every room in the house was making it harder to resist . I had heard about this thing only once before and it had ended in disaster . Cora was a temptation being dangled in front of my nose and it was getting harder to resist .

Giving up on trying to get some sleep , I got out of bed and entered the bathroom . My eyes locked on my reflection in the mirror , making me pause . Red was bleeding into the edges of my pupil , a sure sign of hunger . It was the reason I had been mostly avoiding my brothers and the little human . I didn't want to scare her and I didn't want to give them anything to worry about . They already had enough on their plate .

Keiran was still trying to figure out why Cora got three mates after being rejected by that bastard and why Rowan hadn't spoken a word about Cora until Lucas showed up there . Rowan was under the impression that Cora had died in that fire and Keiran hadn't corrected him . As her previous alpha , it was his job to notify Keiran of the fire and the danger Cora had been in . He was a shitty alpha and that was just one of the reasons I hated him .

If it wasn't for Keiran the man would have been buried six feet under already . Shaking my head , I headed towards the stairs . I hesitated when I reached the door . It was well past midnight . Cora was fast asleep in her bed , so I didn't have to worry about running into her . But I was scared that temptation might lead me into her room like it had since she arrived . No matter how hard I tried to keep my distance , I would always find myself checking up on her .

A scoff fell from my lips as I stepped out of my room . I felt like a fucking teenager all over again . It took me centuries to learn how to control my hunger , but the moment she stepped into our lives , that control seemed to have disappeared completely . I headed towards the kitchen but froze halfway there when I spotted Cora seated at the kitchen table . Staring at her , I hesitated as I tried to figure out what to do . Instead of moving forward , I took a step back .

But the floorboard creaked , giving me away . Cora's head snapped up and her eyes widened . " Axel , " she croaked . " H - Hi . " I swallowed . " What are you doing up so late ? " I questioned as I slowly approached her . " I couldn't sleep . " Her eyes burned into my skin as I moved around the table to get to the fridge . I pulled it open and studied the contents inside . " Do you eat real food ? " she questioned . My lips twitched , " Sometimes , " I muttered .

" I can't taste it , but it makes me feel a little more normal . " She said nothing . I pulled out everything I needed to make a sandwich and carried it over to the counter . It was only when I was halfway done making the sandwich that I remembered to ask Cora if she wanted one . " No , thank you , " she denied softly . Finished with my sandwich , I

turned around and leaned back against the counter to look at her . My eyes trailed over her messy hair that framed her face .

She wore the same pajamas I had found her in that night weeks ago and her feet were bare. She had some colour flooding her cheeks but her skin was still as pale . I would have thought after spending so much time in the sun , she would have picked up a little tan . Had it only been three weeks ago when we found her ? " I haven't seen you around much , " she muttered . 1/3 13 AXEL +25 Bonus " Keiran told you that I'm nocturnal . " I took a bite of the sandwich and slowly chewed .

" I sleep during the day and feed at night . " Her eyes snapped up to mine . There was no use hiding things from her . If I was right and Cora was my mate as well , she needed to know the real me and not some fake created by lies . " Is that why you're up ? " I smiled , enjoying the gasp that fell from her lips when she spotted my fangs . " I'm up because I can't seem to settle down . " Finishing my sandwich , I placed everything back in the fridge and then approached her .

I hesitated a second and then took a seat at the table . Reaching out , I pulled one of her books closer to figure out what she was doing . " Werewolf 101 ? " Core sighed . " Keiran suggested that I attend the class to learn more about them . " " You don't ... " I trailed off . Obviously , he wouldn't make the suggestion if she knew what she needed about them . I read the questionnaire she was busy with . There were a lot of things she had filled in that were wrong .

" Have you read the handbook they gave you when you first joined the class ? " I asked her . She gave me a sheepish look . " You're not going to learn anything if you don't read it . " Another sigh fell from her lips . Cora sat up and shifted in the chair . She leaned down and pulled a book out of her bag . Dropping it to the table , she flipped through the pages . " Can I ask you something ? " " Depends on what you want to ask , " I muttered .

Swallowing , she stared down at the table for a few seconds before she raised her head to look at me . " I heard some people talking . About me and ... " Her eyes darted away . " Ryder already told the whole school that I'm his mate . He's been around me constantly since that happened and I don't find it unpleasant or anything but it's just that ... my mate rejected me . >> " Some people don't understand the value of having a mate .

They don't understand how special it is to have one soul made specially to match your own . " " I'm trying to understand , " she said softly , " It's a little hard to wrap my head around everything , Mom explained things to me but she made it all seem so simple . " "That's because it is simple . There's no need to over - complicate things , Cora . " I leaned forward and picked up the handbook . Placing it down , I searched through the chapters until I found the one I was looking for .

" This goes into more detail about mates , mate - bonds , mating , and so forth . It also gives you the rules about how to act when you meet a mated couple . " " Rules ? " One I chuckled at the look on her face . But she leaned closer when I turned the book towards her . " Men are possessive of their mates and vice versa . When meeting a mated

couple , you don't touch either mate until you're given permission to . Eye contact is also critical .

If you stare at their mates they might take it the wrong way and think you're interested in them or they might consider you a threat . " Cora swallowed loudly . " This explains why Ryder doesn't like it when people stare at me . I've also noticed that Blue doesn't touch me in front of him . She does it a lot when we're alone . Like she just grabs my arm to get my attention or tug on my hair instead of calling out to me . " " He's also protective after what happened with Kelsey , " I told her .

" You heard about that , huh ? " she muttered . " Who hasn't ? " " The pack is close , it's like a grape vine . It's hard to miss anything happening unless it's something that needs to be kept private . Keiran makes sure that pack business stays pack business . " " That's good . " I hummed as I turned the page to another section . " What else do you want to know ? " I asked her . Cora was silent for a few minutes as she thought over my question . " The marking ? How does that happen ?

" " When the couple decides to take the next step , they mark each other . It brings them closer together with the special ability to feel each other's emotions . We call it telepathy . " " Like you can do , " she said . " You were in my head when you found me . " " I shifted in my seat . " It's similar , Where I can enter your mind and ... force you to do things I want you to do , a bond between two mates is different . One cannot make you do something you don't want to do .

But the telepathy bond brings mates closer together . " 2/3 13 AXEL " Do you share that with your mate ? " I hesitated . " I'm not sure if the bonding with my mate will be the

same as theirs . " " Do you have a mate ? " My eyes darted over her face . " Yes , I do .
" " Where's your mate ? " " She's sitting right in front of me . " Cora blinked and then squeaked out a surprised , " Me ? "

c14

He had to be kidding . A smile was playing around his lips , but his eyes were serious as they stared into mine . " Me ? " I repeated dumbly . Axel's smile widened a few notches .
" You . " " Two , " I whispered . I had gone from being rejected by one mate to suddenly having two mates . Frowning , I grabbed the book and scanned the contents inside . " You won't find anything inside that book , " he muttered as he leaned back in the chair .
" Keiran is trying to figure everything out .

" It's never happened before ? " I questioned . " Not that we are aware of . " Axel hesitated a moment before he stood . " Stay , " he ordered softly . " A gasp fell from my lips when he suddenly disappeared into thin air . He was gone for only a few seconds before he reappeared again with a few books in his hand . " How do you do that ? " His eyes darted over my face . " I use the shadows to move from one place to another . It makes traveling easier . " " Can you change into a bat ?

" My eyes trailed over his body . It made me take notice of what he was wearing ; sweatpants that hung low on his hips and a tight black t - shirt that hinted at the muscle underneath . " I can't shapeshift . " Axel scooted his chair closer to mine and then took a

seat again . Placing the books on the table , he moved two aside and opened the third .
" Keiran talked to one of the elders , " he said softly .

" He- " " I thought we agreed to keep things quiet until we had more answers , " Keiran suddenly said from behind me . I jerked in fright and instantly jumped to my feet . Keiran stood at the kitchen entrance , glaring at Axel . " I never agreed on anything , " Axel muttered . " What's the use of hiding things from her ? " Keiran muttered under his breath as he stepped further into the kitchen . His eyes finally locked on me . Frowning , his eyes darted from me to the table .

" It's past midnight , Cora . What are you doing ? " " H - Homework , " I stuttered . " You're the only one I've met who stays up so late to do homework , " he muttered . Walking past the table , he opened the fridge and stared at the contents for a few minutes before he closed it . My lips parted , but I changed my mind and remained silent . Sinking down in my chair again , I watched Keiran move around the kitchen from the corner of my eyes . " Everything okay ? " Axel asked him . He grunted .

A moment later he took a seat opposite Axel and reached for the book open in front of us . He flipped through the pages and stopped on one . " How much have you said ? " " That I'm his mate , " I muttered before Axel could answer . " I have two mates . " Keiran cleared his throat . " Three , " he said so softly I almost didn't hear him . I stared at him . There had to be something wrong with me . This was all just a dream . It had to be a dream . The front door opened and softly closed .

Keiran turned in his chair . A sigh fell from his lips when he spotted Ryder frozen by the end of the stairs . Ryder cleared his throat , and slowly made his way over to the kitchen

. " Having a midnight snack ? " Keiran ran a hand down his face as he turned back in his chair . " I don't know why I even bother . " " Bother with what ? " I questioned in curiosity . 1/3 14 CORA +25 Bonus He gave me a small smile and waved my question away .

I gasped when Ryder lifted me from my chair , took a seat , and then placed me down on his lap . Colour flooded my cheeks when I realized that both Axel and Keiran were staring at us . Well , more like Keiran was glaring at us or rather at Ryder . " I told you to stay away from her , " he growled . " You did , " Ryder sighed , rubbing his nose along the back of my neck . " I wasn't going to stand back and watch that bitch make her life hell . " " I took care of it . " " Did you ?

" Axel cleared his throat . " You can take it out on each other tomorrow on the field . Cora deserves to have her questions answered . " Ryder's arm around my waist tightened and then loosened . He scooted the chair closer to the table and made a hand gesture . " How is it possible ? " I questioned , trying to divert the tension .

" Demetrius mentioned that sometimes when the Goddess thinks that one of us is worthy , she will give us a second chance by giving us a second chance mate , " Keiran started explaining . " We haven't heard of this happening before , but I've made some calls to other packs and asked around . " " Any replies yet ? " Keiran hesitated . " I found one couple so far . I've asked for their contact information so I can get in touch with them . " " Have you found anything more on the Golden Wolves ?

" That caught my attention . " Golden wolves ? " " You know about them ? " Ryder seemed surprised . I shook my head and reached for the book Axel had been flipping through . It was an old book based on the colour of the paper and how worn it was . The cover was plain and made out of leather that looked a little newer . I traced the golden wolf on the front cover with shaky fingertips . My brows dipped into a frown as I studied it .

Something about it felt familiar but I couldn't place my finger on it . Somehow it felt like I had heard about them before . Maybe I had , maybe mom had told me stories she made up about them . " Cora ? " Keiran touched my hand . I glanced at him . " It sounds familiar , " I told them . " I think Mom might have told me stories about them , but I can't remember . " " Demetrius told me about the wolves who lived in the mountain with golden fur and females that had more than one mate .

" Keiran paused . " Mates are either blood brothers or chosen family . It makes sense that the three of us are your mates . I'm trying not to think too much about this other than trying to make sense of how this is going to work and if it will work . " 1 " You don't think it will ? " Axel questioned . Keiran was silent for a while . " I'm scared that if we decide to take things further something might happen . " " Like what ? " Ryder questioned . " Do you have any doubt that she's your mate ?

" My eyes locked with Keiran's . The longer he stared at me , the more doubt started to set in . What if he thought the same of me as Dean ? He was an alpha and an alpha needed a strong mate . Someone who could stand by his side with their head held high and carry his babies . Not a human who might cause complications to his offspring . "

Stop . " My eyes snapped over to Axel . I frowned at him . " I don't like it when you're in my head . " " I needed to know what made you sad .

" He leaned closer and reached out to take my hand . " Our pack dynamic is ... different from other packs , Cora . An alpha isn't born . " " An alpha is chosen based on his strength and his ability to take care of his pack , " Keiran continued . " We have the usual pack dynamic , " Ryder said . " Alpha , Beta , Delta , omega , and so forth . But where most packs see omega's as a burden , we cherish and protect them . " " Blue says that I qualify as an omega because I'm human .

" " And you think because you're human you're too weak and unworthy of us , " Axel muttered . I glared at him . Axel smiled . " To get back to our earlier conversation , I don't think you're weak . I have no problem with you being human . " 2/3 14 COR +25 Bonus " Despite the fact that you're constantly thinking about sucking her blood , " Ryder muttered . His body jerked and a growl fell from his lips . " Asshole . " However , Ryder's words made Keiran study Axel a little closer .

" When was the last time you fed ? " he asked him . Instead of answering , Axel stood . " I think we should call it a night . " " Axel . " Keiran got to his feet and glared at his brother . Clearing his throat Ryder stood and lowered me to my feet . " I say we call it a night . " " Good idea , " Keiran growled . " Go to bed . Alone , Ryder . " " I don't understand what's going on , " I mumbled . " You don't have to .

" Ryder wrapped an arm around my waist and started steering me towards the stairs . " They're just going to start fighting again . " " About me ? " Ryder said nothing . He led the way into my bedroom and then over to my bed . Taking a seat on the edge of the

bed , I frowned at him as he moved around the room . He checked the window and made sure the curtains were pulled closed . When he was done , he took a seat next to me . " I want to take you out on a date tomorrow , " Ryder said softly .

" Just you and me . " " Where ? " I asked . He smiled . " It's a surprise . Just make sure that you dress comfortably . " I swallowed . " O - okay . " " I'll pick you up at eight . "

Leaning forward , he pressed a kiss to my forehead and then stood . " Get some sleep , you'll need it . "

c 15

CORA I was struggling to breathe . No matter how much I tried , I couldn't suck enough air into my lungs . Twigs snapped under my feet and scratched my skin . There was a low growl from somewhere behind me . It was getting closer . I needed to run . Needed to get away from it . I glanced over my shoulder which was a mistake . My foot caught on something , sending me flying through the air and then hitting the ground . I cried out when I hit the ground .

Rolling onto my back , I blinked up at the canopy of leaves high above me . " Run , Cora ! " Mom's voice had me rolling onto my stomach and pushing myself to my feet . My legs shook so badly that I could barely stay on my feet . " Run , baby ! " Run . Run . Run . The monsters were coming . I hadn't seen him . But Mom had . She told me to run as soon as she saw him . He hurt Dad . Tears burned my eyes . He was hurt . Hurt so badly . There was a lot of blood on the floor .

Without realizing it , I had slowed down . It was a mistake . The monster snarled , and then he was on top of me . I screamed and trashed , trying to get free , but claws dug into my skin , making the pain worse . My eyes opened and locked with crimson eyes that hovered above my face . But then they dropped to his mouth . Sharp teeth , covered in blood , snapped inches from my face . I screamed . *** " Cora . " Hands gripped my arms and pulled me up .

I kicked at the body close to mine , but all I got was a low grunt . The hold on my arms tightened . Voices echoed around me . " It was just a bad dream , little red . " A bad dream . It wasn't real . It was just a dream . The monster wasn't coming for me . Opening blurry eyes , I blinked at the face hovering close to mine . Keiran moved messy strands of hair from my face . Someone else was sitting at my other side , rubbing my back soothingly . " Hey , you're okay , " Keiran said softly .

I threw an arm around him and pressed my face to the crook of his neck . Tears wet his skin but he didn't seem to mind . Wrapping his arms around me , he pulled me onto his lap and hugged me closely . His chest vibrated against mine when he suddenly made a sound I had never heard anyone make before . " Cora . " I turned my head to look at Ryder . " Do you want me to get Axel ? " I thought about it for a moment and then shook my head . " He can make you forget . " I shook my head again .

My stomach clenched when the image of the monster flashed through my mind . Gripping Keiran's shirt , I glanced around the room . Sunlight was filtering through the curtains . I jerked upright . " " O - our date . " Ryder shook my words away . " It's still early . " 1/3 15 CORA +25 Bonus I slumped against Keiran again . He raised a hand

and pressed it to the back of my head . His other hand slipped down to the small of my back . My hold on him tightened when he moved .

Keiran got up to his knees and then leaned forward , lowering me onto my back . I blinked up at him in surprise . Now that the fear had faded I realized what position we were in . Colour flooded my cheeks as he hovered over me . Pulling his hand out from under my head , he cupped my cheek and traced my cheekbone softly with his thumb . My breathing sped up again as his finger slipped lower to trace my lips . " Do you want to talk about it ? " I blinked at him . Talk about what ?

It took my brain a while to start functioning again . " N - no , " I croaked . " We're going to stay right here , " he said softly , " in case you need us . " I nodded dumbly . Smiling , Keiran leaned down and pressed a lingering kiss to the corner of my mouth . He then settled at my side with an arm wrapped around my waist . My eyes locked on Ryder as he pulled the sheets over us and then settled on my other side . Keiran's body relaxed and his breathing evened out as he fell asleep .

" I think there's something wrong with him , " Ryder said softly . " He climbs into bed and he's out like a light in seconds . " " Wish I could fall asleep so fast , " I whispered . Ryder moved closer and reached out to twirl a strand of hair around his finger . " Are you okay ? " I took the time to think over his question before I answered him . The remains of the dream still filtered through my mind . My Dad's dead and bloodied body . My mom screams for me to run .

And the monster's face hovering above me . A shiver raced down my spine . Ryder tugged the sheet higher up until my shoulders were covered . " A little shaken , " I told him . " But it was just a dream , right ? " He hummed . " Or a memory . " I frowned at him . Wasn't he supposed to make me feel better ? My eyes darted over his face . He looked tired . " What were you really doing here ? " I asked him . His lips twitched . " I wanted to see you .

" " You saw me a few hours ago at school , " I muttered . i " I did , but it's the weekend and you don't leave the house much so I can't steal some special time with you . " His smile widened . " But now that we don't have to hide the fact that we're seeing each other , I can move back in here . " " Did you move out because of me ? " " No, I moved out because I couldn't deal with my brother's grumpy ass . He's still grumpy but he's more tolerable .

" He wrapped his arm around my waist above Keiran's arm and moved a few inches closer . " Try to get some more sleep , " he said softly . " We won't let the monsters get to you . " " What if the monsters are your own thoughts ? " I hadn't meant to ask him that question . It just slipped out , Ryder's eyes darted over my face . " Then we better start working on fighting those monsters . " Closing my eyes , I tilted my head down a little to press my forehead against his chest .

Ryder instantly pressed his cheek to my head . " Dean rejected me for being human . He said I was too weak to take care of his pack . He said that I'd give him ... I'd give him bastard children . " Keiran's hand twitched . " Cora , they can't judge you for being human , " he said softly . " You can't judge a book by its cover or a person by their looks

. It's what's on the inside that matters the most . " " But what if what's on the outside is on the inside as well ? " I whispered .

" What if I'm as weak - minded as- " 2/3 MS CORA +25 Bonus " Everyone's weak - minded at one point . It's what you make of it that counts , " Ryder said . " Keiran wasn't born an alpha . He worked hard to get where he is today . " " I don't want you to make the wrong choice by accepting me as your mate . " Pressing a finger to my chin , he tilted my head back , forcing me to look at him . He gripped my chin firmly . " You were made for us , Cora . We don't care whether you're human or not .

You could have been a bloodsucker like Axel and we still would have accepted you . Our souls match and that's all that matters . " " It's not , " I told him . " That's the first thing you need to change , " he growled . " Here's what we're going to do , every time you think bad about yourself , I'm going to punish you . " My eyes widened . " Punish me ? " " I'll take away what you like and to get it back , you need to tell me what you like about yourself . " His brows dipped into a frown .

" That's what we'll do for now until I can figure something else out . " Denial was the first thing on my lips , but I stopped myself . I wanted to change , if they were going to accept me as their mate then I needed to change so I could be a good mate to them . " Okay . " Ryder pressed a kiss to my forehead and guided my face back to his chest . "Get some sleep , sunshine . " I snuggled closer to him , closed my eyes , and sucked in a deep breath . He smelled like ... vanilla ?

Keiran smelled like lemongrass and limes . What does Axel smell like ? The shirt they first gave me to wear was hidden in my closet . I didn't know who it belonged to but I

wanted to know because I liked that smell . I wanted to sniff it from the real source . I
frowned . Why was I being so obsessed with that smell ?