

Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates chapter 21-30

Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Rain

When I received a message from my family about pack dynamics, I knew I had to get serious. The first few months of being with your future mate are spent trying to figure out how to live together. Then came the coordination, aka finding a pack to join.

Usually, the mates chose between one of the packs that they belonged to, but in rare cases such as ours, we could make our pack. It needed a minimum of five wolves, which we had. Or we could join whatever pack our families belonged to.

I hadn't spent much time thinking about it. My mind was mostly on trying to adjust to living with Lia and my boys. Then my hormones started taking over and I thought of the official mating ceremony where we would all exchange bite marks and blood with Lia.

It was one of the most important nights of a wolf's life. Besides the coming-of-age ceremony and first hunt. Some traditions have changed as we move into modern times. For example, we didn't have to live in dens and caves. Houses were preferred. Packs would meet in a designed meeting space, often the Alpha of the pack's home or wherever he or she preferred.

I should've spent more time thinking about it. But in my defense, none of my friends had brought it up either! They had failed to mention it to me so I just pushed the idea to the side, trying not to let it bother me.

The Celestial Howl Tribe was my pack and one my family had joined only about one generation ago. With dwindling pack numbers and no new pups being born, the remaining members of my pack were forced to find a new one to join. Not all packs were willing to accept outsiders, but the Celestial Howl Tribe was not one of those.

Some more strict and centuries-old packs called ours too young or filled with silly, progressive ideas. If being accepting your fellow wolves and not forcing them out over an infraction was silly then so be it!

My pack leader was named Orina. She was a firm but open-pack leader who would do everything she could for her pack. I had spoken with her on many occasions, my cousin going on to mate with her daughter! The two of them had two pups already with a third on the way.

The thought of Lia being pregnant with my pup almost made me go feral. Okay, not really. But I was overcome with the idea of putting my pup in her belly. All of us would want her to have our pups. It was... going to make things awkward, but at least wolf pregnancies only lasted five or six months because of how fast the pup grew in the womb.

It would be an hour to have Lia and my friend become a member of the Celestial Howl. The thing was... how would my other friends feel about it? Read full story at findnovel.net

Jesse might not be so keen to join my group and the same with Matt. I think I could convince Colby and Lia... well I don't know. She's been so resistant to everything that it's hard to say what she would do.

Groaning, I ran a hand through my long black locks in frustration. To add to my annoyance, my phone announced that my mom was calling. I thought about ignoring it for a moment but this was my mom. My mom. One didn't ignore their mother and lived to tell the tale even if they were 21 years old, about to graduate from college.

"Hey Mom," I greeted.

She growled. "You were thinking of not answering the phone were you?"

"What? No!"

"Really? Because you answered on the fifth ring, just before your voicemail kicks in. How else should I take that?"

Sweat broke out onto my brow. "Mom don't do this to me. Do you know how much stress I've been under? Lia is still awkward as fuck around us and I've been getting territorial with the guys. Not to mention the fact that we have a big game producing scouts--"

"Rain, take a breath. It sounds like you're gasping for air. I bet you resemble a fish trapped on land right now."

I greedily took a couple of gulps of air, feeling better in an instant.

"Mom, you're a fucking genius."

"Rain, language!"

"Oops?"

"Rain, I called to talk to you about the pack and what you plan to do."

I paled. "Well, I haven't exactly talked to Lia or the guys about this yet."

"Excuse me?"

"I said "

"No, Rain I know what you've said. What I can't believe is that you've said that. The five of you are supposed to be figuring this out!"

“Mom, we will! We have up to a year to figure out what pack we want to join.”

She sighed. “No six months.”

“What the fuck?” I blurted out.

“Rain! For fucks sake, language.”

“You just swore-“

This time mom growled. “All right, you have six months. They recently changed the law and if you don’t have a pack by then, the choice will be made for you by the werewolf council.”

Well, shit.

When I grabbed my phone later that day, I thought about talking to Lia about figuring out what to do with the pack situation, but instead, I wanted to apologize for what I had done about a week or so ago. It was about time I apologized anyway.

Hey. About earlier... I wanted to apologize for kissing you. I wasn’t thinking straight, and it wasn’t fair to you. -R

It’s fine, Rain. Really. -L

Wait, is it fine? You’re not mad? -R

No, I’m not mad. If I’m honest... I liked it. -L

You did? -R

Yeah, I did. But—and this is a big “but”—this whole situation is complicated. -L

Do you mean, “complicated” like having four mates, all of whom have a history of tormenting you? -R

Exactly that. If this is going to work—if we’re ever going to have any sort of peace—you all need to have a good relationship with each other. -L

That’s easier said than done. You’ve seen how Matt and Jesse are. Colby’s always trying to boss people around. -R

It doesn’t matter. This isn’t just about you. You’re all in this together, and I’m stuck in the middle. If you can’t figure out how to make it work, it’ll just push me further away. -L

Okay, that's fair. I'll try. For you. -R

Try harder than "try." You can't just sit back and make sarcastic comments every time someone does something stupid. -L

Are you accusing me of being the sarcastic one? Because Matt exists. -R

Rain. Focus. -L

Fine, fine. I'll try. But you know, it's not just me. The other guys must meet me halfway. -R

Maybe they will if they see you're serious about it. -L

And if they don't? -R

Then they'll have to deal with me. -L

That's kind of scary. But it's also kind of hot. -R

Rain, I swear -L.

Relax. I'll play nicely. You have my word. -R

Good. Because despite everything, I think you might be worth the trouble. -L

You're making me blush over here, Lia. -R

You're impossible. -L

And yet, here we are. -R

Yes... here we are. -L

I tried not to grin but the cheesy grin came anyway. Lia was slowly opening to me, something I never thought was going to happen. It was something that warmed my heart and scared the shit out of me a little bit.

Never thought I could feel this way about another person. Sure, we all heard the rumors of how it felt to finally find your match but experiencing it and hearing about it were two very different things.

But it also came with some tough decisions such as what we were going to do with our pack situation. As fussy as my mom was, she was right. The five of us did have to figure out what we were going to do. Either we joined one of the packs we were a member of or went ahead and created a new one.

A huge part of me wanted to stay with my pack. They had been nothing but warm and loving to me, always making me feel like I was part of a family. Why would I want to give that up? I want to share it with Lia and my boys.

Groaning, I wish it were that easy to figure out by myself, but I was going to have to talk to the other guys eventually. They were probably having conversations with their families about this as well.

Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Colby

“As a member of the Iron Fang Pack, you need to make us proud. You must convince your future mate and the rest of the men to join the Iron Fangs.”

I forced a smile on my face as the elders of the pack gazed upon me through the Zoom call. They were the type of pack that enjoyed traditions but also took advantage of technological advances. Sometimes, it felt a bit hypocritical about what things they chose to hold upon and the things they decided weren't worth continuing.

When I realized my friends and I were going to be Lia's future mates, I tried not to think too much about our future pack dynamics. It was going to need to happen within six months so I wanted to just focus on bonding with Lia.

But the Iron Fangs had a different idea. They had been reaching out to me to have a video call with them for weeks now. I tried to put it off for as long as I could, but I couldn't ignore it any longer.

“I'll do my best.”

One of the elders snarled. Her lip curled upwards, baring her fangs.

“You'll do more than your best! You must join the Iron Fangs as all your family has done before you.”

Of course, that was the one fucking tradition they wanted to keep. I almost rolled my eyes, knowing I needed to wait until I hung up on the Zoom call.

Rain walked into our shared room just as I was getting off the phone with them. I had a scowl on my face and Rain did a double take.

“Uh, what's with the sourpuss look on your face?”

“The Iron Fangs are riding my ass about getting us to choose that pack to join,” I muttered, glaring out the window. “I wasn’t sure what to hell to do except just keep nodding.”

Rain scratched his head. “Yeah, my pack is doing the same thing but yours seems forceful about it.”

“It’s the Iron Fangs, Rain. What part of the name sounds nice at all?”

He blinked. “No part of it does.”

“Exactly, that’s my point, Rain.”

I threw myself onto the bed, knowing I was going to have to talk with everyone sometime soon. If Rain’s pack was on his ass too then we had to get to it in the coming weeks.

“Do you have any preference, Rain?”

“I mean, I would want to stay with my pack. It’s probably what all of us want to do-“

I shook my head. “No, not Matt.”

“

“Oh, right,” he whispered, shoulders slumping. “Yeah, Matt can’t stand his pack. What about Jesse?”

“They might push for it but know that Jesse is ultimately not going to consider them in the decision. He’s going to consider Lia and us, no one else.”

At least that made it a little easier for us to figure out what we were going to do. Still, Jesse might change his mind. The only one I was sure about was Matt who hated his pack with a dying passion. He had hated them since he was younger, refusing to accept how they shunned a family member of his. Latest content published on findnovel.net

The two of us sat there for a while, Rain leaving when he sensed I wanted to be alone. I didn’t know what I was going to do about my family. They usually sided with the pack with one or two dissenting voices but it wouldn’t be very strong.

This was just how it was.

I was going to have to think about it and make a choice. At some point, I was going to be forced to disappoint someone. It was just simply how it was.

Not that I wanted to.

Would my parents be disappointed in me? I didn't want to disappoint them. They were my family. All my family had been in this pack for decades. It was expected of me to join it and honestly, I assumed I would.

Until this situation happened.

Sighing, I stared up at the ceiling. With the way my mind was spiraling today, I don't think I was going to be able to get any sleep. What was more likely I would be tossing and turning all night, before finally getting up and heading downstairs.

The stress was starting to get to me. It got to the point where I got up early the next morning and headed downstairs earlier than usual. I stopped on my tracks when I noticed Lia was downstairs. To think she had gotten up early and beat me down here was surprising.

She didn't notice me or if she did, she kept her attention on her phone and her cup of tea. I knew Lia enjoyed switching between tea and coffee. I, on the other hand, was the type of person who refused to give tea a chance. What I preferred was a strong dose of espresso with some cream mixed in.

I stood in the doorway, watching Lia sip her tea. She hadn't even noticed me yet, or at least she pretended not to. For a moment I wondered if I should turn around and leave. But then I realized I was up for a reason, coffee!

"Hey," I said, trying to sound casual. "What are you doing up so early?"

She glanced at me, raising an eyebrow. "Just couldn't sleep very well."

"It happens," I muttered, stepping into the kitchen. "Listen, I wanted to talk to you about something."

She sighed and set her mug down. "Colby, if this is about the dishes—"

"It's not," I said quickly, holding up a hand. "It's about... you know. Before."

Her jaw tightened. "Don't."

"I just "

"No." She turned fully to face me, crossing her arms. "We're not doing this again."

"But I feel like I need to say it—"

"You don't," she interrupted her tone firm. "You've apologized. I've accepted it. End of story."

“Yeah, but-“

“Colby,” she said sharply, cutting me off. “Dragging this up every few weeks isn’t helping either of us. It’s done.”

I ran a hand through my hair, searching for the right words. “I just... I feel like I owe it to you-“

“Stop,” she said, her voice softer but no less resolute. “You don’t owe me anything. What happened, happened. We’ve moved past it. Haven’t we?”

“Yeah, I guess,” I mumbled, looking away.

“Then stop beating yourself up over it. Seriously. It’s exhausting.”

I blinked, startled. “Exhausting?”

“Yes,” she said, picking up her mug again. “For both of us.”

I leaned back against the counter, exhaling slowly. “Okay. I get it. I’ll stop.”

“Good.” She took a sip of her tea and then gave me a pointed look. “Now, can we focus on figuring out how to live in the same house without driving each other insane?”

“I mean, I think we’re doing all right so far,” I said, trying for a grin. “You haven’t killed me yet.”

“Not yet,” she said, smirking. “But you’re still on thin ice.”

“Noted.” I smiled, feeling a little lighter. “Thanks, Lia.”

She rolled her eyes but didn’t say anything else. I took that as a good sign.

“Also... have any of the guys or your brother talked to you about the pack situation?”

“>

Lia blinked, voice going soft. “Oh, yes. Michael mentioned it to me when we were talking the other night. He didn’t think you all had said something because you didn’t want to stress me out.”

“That would be correct. But we’re also trying to figure out things ourselves,” I admitted. “We need to have a discussion soon.”

“I agree.”

“”

I wanted to ask Lia what she was thinking we should do but I decided to just let it be.

The two of us stood in the kitchen together, drinking our separate drinks. A sweet scent caught my attention, causing me to shift closer to Lia and take a sniff.

She flushed. “Colby, what are you doing?”

“Sorry, you smell nice this close.”

“Are you saying I smell bad from far away?”

I chuckled. “No, you don’t smell bad far away. You smell good from far away and close. But good close.”

Her cheeks were flushed. I was worried that I was making her uncomfortable but then I smelled how calm she was. If she were uncomfortable, I would be able to smell it on here. As wolves our senses of smell were always greater, but being someone’s mate opened yourself up to a whole bunch of different scents.

“Colby, can you take a step away?”

I cleared my throat. “Sorry, am I overstepping my bounds?”

I would be lying if I didn’t admit that I wanted to pull her into my arms and feel her body against my mind, but we weren’t at that point. It was important to treat your mate with the utmost respect and respect for their boundaries.

This was something I didn’t do before, always bullying her and treating Lia like shit. It wasn’t something I wanted to do again.

Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates

Jesse

I sat across from the Alphas of the Fangstorm Brotherhood. They had requested I meet with them and I decided to get it finished. We all stared at one another for a while, the silence stretching on.

The Fangstorms were an odd pack. They heeded the old traditions like they were gospel. For them, it was of the utmost importance to stick to these traditions. But, if someone in the pack didn’t want to then they simply let them choose that path.

If their path led them away from the pack then so be it. There would be no shunning or hatred towards them. It was simply how the ancestors wished it to be. This update is available on [Fund Novel.net](http://FundNovel.net)

“Jesse, you know why we have brought you here, correct?”

I nodded. “You wish to know what pack we will be aligning ourselves with.”

“Precisely,” one of the elders told me. “Have you made your decision yet or are the five of you still considering your options?”

“We are still considering our options and to be honest, I don’t care what pack we end up with,” I said truthfully. “I am completely neutral on the subject.”

The elders all nodded together thoughtfully. “We respect that answer, Jesse, and look forward to hearing the decision no matter what you choose.”

When I got back to the house, Matt was pacing in the living room. My eyebrows shot up.

“What’s with you?”

“Nothing,” Matt snapped.

I blinked. “Okay.”

Matt sighed. “Jesse, are you seriously not going to ask what’s wrong?”

“Matt, I don’t play that game. If something is wrong with you then you need to tell me straight out or I’m just going to ignore you and go about my day.”

He groaned. “I’m having a tough time with my pack. They are assholes who demand that I follow tradition.”

“I don’t have that problem.”

It wasn’t as if I was trying to brag, but I was being matter of fact. He glared at me. I just stared back at him until the glare finally faded. This was the best way to get someone to stop glaring at you, in my opinion.

“Yes, well we can’t all be members of a pack that respects that some people balk against tradition.”

I hummed. “Perhaps we should all go to your pack elders and alpha to speak with them. They will see we are a united front and hopefully back down.”

“Jesse, do you honestly believe that?”

“No, but it is worth it, is it not?” I asked truthfully.

The worst that could happen was they could chase us out. But I don’t know if Matt is ready to confront them yet.

His pack had always been difficult. They wanted to control his every move, dictating his life from birth to adulthood. I knew their pack dynamics were toxic and over the years, the pack had shrunk considerably over the years. It was no wonder they were losing people because of how strict they were.

The younger generation of wolves were living at rapid rates the pack had never seen before. I couldn’t blame Matt for being frustrated. My friend and I always assumed that he was going to leave. It just wasn’t up for debate. Why would he want to stay?

None of us were going to consider joining; that much was for sure. I certainly wasn’t going to let Lia join-not that I would ever order her around.

“It’ll be over soon,” I assured Matt. “You’ll be leaving that pack and will find a new one.”

Matt huffed. “The problem with that is I am not sure if they will let me go without a huge fight.”

“They need to be snuffed out.”

The words tumbled from my mouth before I could control myself. Matt gaped at me but then he burst out laughing.

“Jesse, there are times when your bluntness scares the shit out of me but at times like this it makes me laugh.”

“I do my best to achieve both outcomes, but it’s difficult to achieve both at the same time,” I lamented, a small smile making its way across my lips.

Matt stepped back. “Jesse, you know what happens when you smile. It creeps everyone out.”

“Is it creeping you out right now, Matt?”

“Yes,” I answered without so much as any hesitation. 1

Later that night, I found myself needing a glass of water. I headed downstairs and was surprised to bump into Lia. She looked at me, smiling nervously.

But her smile didn’t look as nervous as it usually did. Over the weeks we had been living together, the more comfortable she became with me.

I knew that most people were uncomfortable with me. It was simply a fact I had come to accept at an early age. People would say I was too intense or quiet. Quiet people could snap in a moment's notice and you wouldn't even know it because they were so quiet.

Lia was drinking some tea, one of her preferred drinks. I had no preference for tea or coffee. Whatever was available would be good enough for me.

"You know," Lia whispered, "I used to be scared of you."

"Scared?" I asked, glancing at her.

"Yeah," she said, shrugging. "You're quiet. The strong, silent type. And that stare of yours? Intense. Felt like you were sizing me up every time you looked at me."

"Wasn't sizing you up," I said. "Just... watching."

"Exactly!" she said, leaning forward. "The watching. It was like you could see through me. Like you were analyzing every move I made."

"Didn't mean to."

"I figured," she said. "But it was unnerving. Especially when we were younger. I didn't know what to do with someone who didn't talk much. Everyone else around me just-talks."

I smirked faintly. "Not my style."

"Clearly," she said, rolling her eyes. "But back then, I thought it meant something bad. Like you were judging me or waiting for me to mess up or something."

"Never thought that."

"I know that now," she said quickly. "It's just... you've got this way of being in the room without saying a word, but it's like your presence fills it anyway."

I shrugged. "Not trying to."

"I know," she said, then paused. "I think I kind of like it now."

"Like what?"

"That you don't fill the space with words," she said. "It's... different. Most people can't stand silence. They just ramble. But you? You let the quiet sit. It's... nice."

"Nice?"

“Yeah,” she said, nodding. “It makes me feel like I don’t have to try so hard. Like I can just... be.”

“That’s good,” I said.

“It is,” she agreed. “And honestly, I feel less... I don’t know, I am intimidated by you. I mean, I still think you’re intense, but it’s not scary anymore. It’s kind of comforting.”

“Comforting?”

“Yeah, like... you’re steady,” she said, glancing at me. “You don’t flinch, you don’t panic. You’re just... there. Solid. I get it now.”

I nodded slowly. “Took you a while.”

She laughed. “Yeah, well, I wasn’t exactly a fan of being stared at, Jesse.”

“Not staring,” I said.

“You were,” she said, smirking. “But it’s fine. I know you were just... watching. Taking things in. That’s who you are.” “Pretty much.”

“See? Even now, you’re doing it,” she teased.

I raised an eyebrow. “Doing what?”

“Being all... you,” she said, gesturing vaguely. “Quiet. Intense. Like you’re waiting for me to say something profound.”

“Not waiting for profound,” I said. “Just listening.”

“Listening,” she repeated, nodding. “That’s another thing. You listen. Most people don’t. They just wait for their turn to talk. But you? You hear everything.”

“Only when it’s worth hearing,” I said, and she laughed again.

“Okay, see? That’s what I mean. You barely say anything, but when you do, it’s-what’s the word-weighty.”

“Weighty?”

“Yeah,” she said, grinning. “Like, it sticks. Makes people think.”

I smirked. “Maybe that’s the point.”

“Maybe,” she said, tilting her head. “But either way, I’m glad I’m not scared of you anymore. You’re... not so bad, Jesse.”

“Thanks,” I said dryly.

“Don’t let it go to your head,” she teased.

“Wouldn’t dream of it.”

She smiled, leaning back onto the couch. “You’re all right, Jesse.”

I just nodded, letting the silence settle between us again.

It was a polite conversation. I did want to touch her, to put my mark on her but the time would come when I’d be able to do this. It was just going to take time.

Lia was adjusting to all of this, but she was adjusting faster than we ever thought she would.

The two of us stood there for a while before Lia told me that she needed to go back to bed. I nodded towards her, giving her a small smirk. It was better for me to smile rather than smile because as I’ve said before, my smile did tend to upset people. 1

A few times I stared in the mirror, trying to figure out if it was truly as scary as people thought it was. The result was no, it wasn’t scary. I thought it looked fine, but I suppose I couldn’t see it because I was looking for it through my lens rather than the lens of others.

Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates

Matt

I was in a bad fucking mood. The Ashen Howl tribe was full of a bunch of assholes, which was why I hated them to my very core. It didn’t matter if they were the pack I was born into or not. The only thing I ever thought about was getting as far away from them as possible.

This is something I always wanted! I knew my chance would come once I found a mate. I would hope that we’d choose her pack, but now I had the chance to make my own. It was honestly a fucking relief. To be able to start from nothing and make a pack with just me, Lia, and my friends was more than I could ever want.

My sister had been kicked out of this pack for refusing to mate with her chosen mate right away. It was common now for people to go ahead and get an education or start a career first. No reason to rush into it before you are financially secure.

But the Ashen Howl tribe was set in the old ways. They didn't want to change with the times, frustrating everyone. At least they were frustrating the younger generation.

I wished that I could leave without fear of being shunned by my family. The chances were high that if I didn't choose to stay with the Ashen Howl pack then I was going to be shunned, unable to talk with any of my former pack members.

And do you know what? Fuck them. I am fine with that. My sister, who I still spoke to, had suffered in the beginning months after being shinned. The only person who refused to cut ties with her was me because I would never do that to my sister. She was the one person who was always there for me.

After they shunned her, I decided to leave as soon as I could. This was not my chance to get hell away from them. 1

My friends knew how I felt. They would never suggest we pledge ourselves to Ashen Howl Park. Most in the area tried to avoid us anyway! Being stuck in the old ways didn't earn you friends. What it earned you were enemies.

Colby's pack found an effective way to balance it. Rain's was a little too hippy-dippy for me, but it was still better than my pack set in a centuries-old tradition.

A growl of frustration escaped me. What was I going to do? I couldn't stand being in this pack any longer.

They had been leaving me calls, demanding I come to meet with the alpha and elders so we could have a discussion. But I was ignoring them. One of their favorite threats was that if I kept ignoring them then they would kick me out before we made a choice.

I told them to go ahead and do that. How was it a threat if that was what I wanted?

It made me extra angry and on edge, but I tried my best to keep it to myself. I did avoid everyone, making sure that I told them I wasn't doing this because I was angry at them. The point was to make sure I didn't lash out at them when I was this on edge.

Rain joked that it was 'growth.' I was annoyed by the comment, but it was true. Learning Lia was my mate had caused a lightbulb to go off in my head.

I'd be okay in a few days. The best thing to do was keep to myself, making sure that I didn't hurt anyone's feelings.

The anger started to fade when I blocked all numbers from my pack. I don't know why I didn't do that before, but logic wasn't my strong point when I was in the thick of my rage. All the guys were fine with it. Lia was the one I was worried about.

Especially after running into Simone the other day when she gave me a piece of her mind.

Hey. -M

Hey. -L

I just wanted to check-in. How's it going? -M

Uh, fine, I guess. You? -L

Same. Figured I'd, uh, text you instead of... avoiding you. -M

Oh. That's... good. I guess? -L

Yes. Avoiding you isn't helping either of us, huh? -M

Probably not. -L

So... What have you been up to today? -M

School. Simone's been pestering me about... well, everything. -L

Classic Simone. She doesn't let up. -M

Nope. She's relentless. -L

I think I like that about her, though. She doesn't give up. -M

You've had the Simone experience, huh? -L

Oh. Remember after that rugby game when I accidentally bumped into you? -M

Oh, God. She cornered you, didn't she? -L

Yep. Pretty sure she threatened my kneecaps. -M

Sounds right. -L

Is she always like that? -M

Always. Protective to a fault. -L

It's kind of like Michael. -M

Michael thinks "protective" means letting his friends torment me. -L

Okay, fair point. But for what it's worth, I think he means well. -M

Maybe. Doesn't always feel like it, however. -L

Yes. Look... I know we've been kind of... awful to you. -M

Kind of? -L

Okay, awful. I'm sorry. -M

Matt, you've apologized before. You don't have to keep doing it. -L

I know, but I still feel like I should. -M

Well, don't. It's exhausting for both of us. -L

Fair. I'll focus on... being better. -M

That's all I ask. -L

So... any plans tonight? -M

Nope. Just trying to survive the chaos at home. -L

Is the chaos being... us? -M

Yep. You are all like a pack of overgrown puppies. -L

Ouch. Accurate, though. -M

Very. -L

I'll try to keep the "puppies" in line. -M

Good luck with that. -L

Thanks. I'll need it. -M

You will. -L

Hey... for what it's worth, I do appreciate you putting up with me. -M

I'm trying, Matt. -L

Me too. -M

I can tell. -L

Guess I'll keep texting you, then. -M

Guess you should. -L

I couldn't wipe the cheesy grin off my face if I tried. Lia and I were getting to a point where the awkwardness was starting to fade. The two of us nearly kissed the other day when we went out for a date, something all the guys were trying to do with her. We had our group time but also one-on-one time with Lia.

The jealousy sometimes kicked in, but I remembered Lia's warning. She didn't want us to fall that far into our instincts. It would push Lia away, something neither of us wanted.

Then any joy I had faded when two of the elders from my pack showed up at the door when we were getting ready for dinner. I smelled them the second they turned into the driveway. Growling, I was tempted to ignore them, but this would only extend the problem.

"What do you want?" I asked, opening the door without so much as a warning.

I didn't care if these were my elders from the pack. They expected you to show them respect no matter what was going on.

"Is that how you speak to the elders?" Elder Simon said.

He bared his teeth to me, but I didn't even flinch.

"Yes, because I thought by blocking your numbers you would get the message that I want nothing to do with pack."

Elder Edith growled. "If you think we'll let you leave like this—"

"Excuse me, this is my house given to me by my parents!" Lia shouted, showing up beside me. She was smaller than them, but it didn't stop her from putting herself between us. "Matt is also my future mate. He decided he didn't want to stay with your pack and as the law states, it is his right!" Read complete version only at Find-Novel.net

Then she did something that had me grinning like an idiot; Lia grabbed the door and slammed it in their faces. Eventually, they did leave, likely embarrassed at how they had been yelled at by Lia who was backless. 1

Wolves might end up pack-less for several reasons. In Lia and Michael's case, their parents had died, leaving only two others in their dwindling pack. With Lia and Michael being young at the time, the pack dissolved.

"Lia, your fucking amazing," I whispered to her, leaning down to cup her cheek.

I pressed my lips to hers, unable to resist. She gasped softly, lips parting to allow me more access.

The other guys kept quiet and there wasn't so much as one growl out of them. Good. It means the jealousy is kept to a tolerable level.

Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

My future mates seemed to be preoccupied with what we were going to do about our future pack decisions. I didn't know what to do as I was packless, something that came with its issues.

Our parents were part of a small pack, to begin with. They claimed they didn't want to leave and wanted to stay because this was where their loyalty lay. Yes, it was small, but they were family. After my parents died, the rest of the pack decided to go their separate ways.

It was my parents that were the glue that held it together. Without them, the others didn't see the point. Michael and I were still young, having not gone through our coming-of-age ceremony yet so we had no legal rights to vote on the fate of the pack.

Soon we found ourselves packless, a fate that wasn't as uncommon as people thought in modern-day wolf society. Wolves just didn't want to talk about it often, treating it like it was some type of taboo subject.

I never shied away from the fact that I didn't have a pack. Some classmates tried to embarrass me about it, but I never let it get under my skin because it didn't. Yes, I was without a pack and so what?

But, I was looking forward to being part of a pack again. Whether we created one ourselves or I joined one of my mate's packs. It would be nice to have an instant family. At least, in theory, this was what a pack was supposed to represent.

Matt's pack... was difficult and Colby's seemed the same. I wasn't sure about Rain and Jesse's packs. Personally, I think creating our own pack would be best. It would be small, but perhaps we could recruit other wolves in the future.

As I stared out the window during my last class of the day, I thought of how much had changed in a few weeks. When I first learned that my chosen mates were my four tormenters AKA my brother's best friends, I was ready to flee the state.

I don't know when things started to shift inside me. It happened after they moved in with me and a little around the time Michael moved out. Being with just them in the house forced me to interact with them more, unable to use my brother as a buffer.

I've since apologized for that. Michael wasn't one to hold such a grudge—at least not over that and certainly not from his sister.

When the bell rang, I was gabbing my bag and rushing towards the door. Simone had left school early today because of a doctor appointment so I reluctantly asked the guys to drive me. The reality was, I needed one to drive me back home. All four? No, but they were starting to get territorial again so I said they can just come to the school together.

I got side tracked on my way out of school by one of my teachers, wanting to check in with me and see how I was doing. She was one of my favorite teachers in the school and one who understood my past fear of having my coming of age ceremony.

My phone buzzed, drawing my attention away from the conversation.

Hey, we're here! 😊 – R

“Miss, I have to get going. Thank you for stopping to talk to me.”

“Anytime, Lia. Have a good night.”

Smiling, I headed outside and stopped in my tracks. The guys were parked behind a long row of cars, and standing on the sidewalk presumably waiting for me. It was what I expected to see... except for the four or five girls from my school who had approached them, giggling.

They were doing the stereotypical flirting behavior. Flipping their hair, batting their eyelashes, and giggling up a storm. I gripped the straps of my backpack, anger hitting me in an instant.

How dare they flirt with my chosen mates so blatantly when I could stumble upon them at any moment? They had no shame! They knew I was their future mate. The gossip of my coming-of-age ceremony results had spread all over the school like wildfire.

Growling softly, I took a step forward but then froze in mid-step. I... was jealous of those girls. What I was experiencing right now was jealousy, something I never thought I was going to experience towards those four. 2

“Oh hey, Lia!” Rain shouted, waving me over.

I stiffened, forcing a smile and trying to pretend that I was all right.

The girls scattered all except one of them. Madison gazed at me, almost scoffing at my presence.

“See you around,” she said, giggling with one last hair flip before walking away.

“Let’s get home,” I muttered, glaring daggers at Madison.

The one thing running through my mind right now was getting my hands on Madison and tearing her from limb to limb.

When I got home, I went straight to my room. I felt my phone going off so I looked at my messages and saw that Simone had sent me a message. This chapter is updated by FindN0vel.net

My hands were shaking as I grabbed my phone. I couldn’t believe what was going on right now. Had I, Lia Brown been jealous of some of my fellow schoolmates for flirting with my mates? I wanted to chalk it up to the fact that my wolf instincts and hormones were running through my body, going crazy.

But I felt it was more than that. So, I did what I always did, I turned to my best friend Simone and texted her. She sensed something was off with me when we were at school, but I told her that I was fine.

Simone didn’t believe me. She just left it alone because she didn’t want to stress me out in front of my mates. If they realized I was jealous then they were going to say something. I don’t know if I could deal with the embarrassment.

What’s up? -S

Simone, you won’t believe this-I got jealous today. Me! -L

Wait, YOU? Jealous? Of what? -S

Those girls flirted with Colby, Rain, Matt, and Jesse when they came to pick me up. -L

Oh my God. Lia? -S

Yes, really! I don’t even know why, but I was standing there, watching them giggle and flip their hair, and I just felt—ugh— possessive. Like, “Get away from them!” -L

Possessive? Lia, you’re turning into one of those jealous mates we read about. -S.

Stop! Don’t make me feel worse. I’ve never been like this before! I don’t get jealous. But today? I was fuming. -L

Okay, okay, but this is kind of hilarious. Are you jealous? Over the guys, you swore annoyed you. This is a peak drama. -S It’s not funny, Simone! I just felt... off. Like, seeing them with those girls made me want to step in and—ugh—I don’t even know. -L

Sounds like the mate bond is hitting you hard. Your inner omega is coming out to play. -S

What mates bond? I'm not even close to accepting all this yet! They're infuriating and teasing and-why would I care who flirts with them? -L

Oh, sure. "Why would I care?" That's why you were glaring at girls like they stole your lunch. Lia, it's normal to feel this way. They're your mates. -S

But they're still the same guys who've annoyed me my whole life. I don't even like them like that! -L 1

Uh-huh. That's why you're jealous of random girls. Admit it, you're starting to see them differently. -S

Simone, stop psychoanalyzing me! This is why I didn't want to tell you. -L

Fine, fine. But honestly, it's kind of sweet. They're your mates, Lia. It's okay to feel protective. It's instinct, not weakness. -S

Do you think so? -L

Absolutely. You're just adjusting to the bond. Don't fight it so hard. It's natural to want to keep what's yours. -S

...I hate that you're making sense. -L

I always do. And hey, at least now I know you'd growl if someone flirted with them. That's badass. -S

I am not growling at anyone! -L

Sure, sure. But if it happens, I want to be there to see it. -S

Simone, I can't believe I'm saying this, but you're worse than the guys. -L

And yet, you still love me. -S

I dropped my phone onto my bed and stared up at the ceiling.

How was this happening to me? I couldn't believe I was feeling jealous over a bunch of my classmates flirting with Jesse, Colby, Rain, and Matt. Whether I liked it or not, they had only eyes for me. The guys had made that clear since we started living together.

I hoped none of the guys had noticed. Rain likely didn't and for Matt, it was up in the air. However, when it came to Jesse and Colby, I knew that the chances were high that they could have noticed. Those two, out of the four, were the ones who noticed these types of things.

If by chance they did happen to notice then I hope they wouldn't bring it up to me. I don't think I could live with myself if they did.

Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Colby

I kept thinking about what happened when Lia was approaching us just as those girls were blatantly flirting with us as we waited for her to come outside. They just walked up to us, giggling and trying to engage in conversation with us.

Rain started talking to them right away, but he was a friendly outgoing guy. He likely didn't even realize they were flirting. Meanwhile, Matt just kept grunting in response to their questions and Jesse blatantly ignored them! I was the only one attempting to genuinely talk to them while aware of what they were trying to do.

It was disrespectful for them to do it when they knew Lia was nearby.

The second she saw the girls, I saw the jealousy flash across her face. She was experiencing a case of the green-eyed monster rearing its ugly head. It happened with me and the guys, but in Lia's case, there was no reason for her to be jealous!

I had no interest in anyone but Lia. The same could be said for Rain, Matt, and Jesse. Speaking for them wasn't something I'd normally do. Except in this case because I knew I could safely answer for them.

As much as I hated to think of Lia being jealous... it also filled me with some joy. For weeks now I wondered if any of us were making any real headway in our relationship with Lia. Now I knew that she might deny her feelings again and again, but there was something there that she felt for us.

When the realization hit me, I hopped on the group chat to talk to the guys. They should hear what I had to say.

Guys, I think Lia was jealous. -C

Jealous? Of what? -R

Do you remember when those girls from her school were fawning over us at the pickup? -C

Yes, what about it? -M

Lia was glaring. Like, actual daggers. -C

She glares at you all the time. -R

No, this was different. Trust me, it was jealousy. -C

Jealous? Lia? I don't see it. -J

I swear. Especially when that one girl asked if we were single. Lia looked like she wanted to throw something. -C

Or someone. -M

Exactly! You saw it too, Matt, didn't you? -C

...Maybe. -M

Wow, Matt agrees with Colby. This might be a sign of the apocalypse. -R

She probably just thought they were annoying. I mean, they were. -M

Or she didn't like them around us. You know because she's jealous. -C

Or protective. Significant difference. -J

No, it was jealous. I could tell. -C

What does it even mean if she was jealous? -R

It means she's starting to care. -C

Or it means you're imagining things. -M

Not imagining. I'm observant. -C

You're a menace. -J

I prefer "charming." -C

You'd better not bring it up to her. -M

Why not? It's funny. -C

Because she'll shut down, genius. -J

Jesse's right. If you push too far, she'll probably stop talking to us altogether. -M

She wouldn't stop talking to me. She loves me. -C

Colby, you're delusional. -R

Delusional but right. Admit it, you're all a little jealous that I'm her favorite. -C

Her favorite to ignore? Sure. -M

Keep pushing her, Colby. See how that works out for you. -J

Okay, okay. I'll drop it. For now. -C

Good. She's dealing with enough without your nonsense. -J

Fine, but I'm just saying—it was jealousy. -C

And we're just saying, don't test her patience. -M

Oh, he'll test it. He always does. -R

Worth it. -C

Chuckling to myself, I knew I was going to be tempted to talk to Lia at some point. I didn't want to rub in the fact that she felt jealous, but I wanted to tell her that she had nothing to worry about, and nor did she have to be ashamed about it.

We had done some shitty things towards her over the years, something I still struggled with guilt over. I did what I could to move past the guilt but a guy could only apologize so many times before it became too much.

I wasn't going to talk to Lia yet. She was still up in her room, having run up there as soon as we picked her up from school. The four of us hadn't meant to draw attention but we were four popular members of a rugby team. No matter where we went, the four of us were doing to draw attention.

Normally Michael would be thrown into this chaos as well, but he had been spending more and more time with his mate. They were going to be officially mated by the end of this year, something that was exciting.

The five of us were always going to be friends, but things were going to start to change now that we were getting into adulthood. I could either despair over this fact or I could accept that it was the truth... and that was what I was going to do.

Lia

By the next day, I felt I had finally reached the point where I didn't have to worry about anyone coming to me and bringing up the fact that I was jealous.

But then Colby approached me when I was finishing up some schoolwork in the living room. He sat down next to me, nudging me with his leg,

“Hey.”

I blinked. “Hi, Colby.”

“How are you doing?”

“I was doing fine until you sat down next to me and started asking strange questions,” I admitted, eying him warily. “What’s wrong with you?” 1

“Nothing is wrong with me. Why do you think something is automatically wrong with me?” Latest content published on [find•novel.net](#)

“Do I need to repeat what I just said?” I asked with a roll of my eyes. “Colby, stop with this crap and just tell me what is going on. The sooner you get to it the sooner I can move on and finish my school work. This is the last batch I have to do before graduation and I’m eager to get it done.

Colby sighed. “Okay, fine we’ll get right to it then. I saw how you were the other day and I just wanted to talk about it.” “I don’t know what you’re talking about...”

“Lia, you don’t have to be ashamed of it. Jealousy is completely normal.”

My cheeks turned bright red, the blush spreading down to my neck.

“Why are you doing this to me? I think you want to embarrass me.”

“No!” Colby exclaimed. “That’s not what I want to do at all, Lia. I just want to let you know that it’s okay to feel jealous. It is completely normal.”

I sighed softly. “Okay, I was jealous. Why do we even need to talk about it?”

“Like I said, I just want you to know that it’s okay. But you also don’t have anything to worry about. None of us have any interest in anyone but you.”

“I know that, Colby. You don’t have to tell me that but I do appreciate it nonetheless.”

Even though I knew none of the guys had eyes for only me, I still felt this happiness rush over me at hearing it confirmed. I smiled, ducking my head so Colby wouldn’t see the silly grin on my face. 1

“You blushing and grinning like an idiot aren’t you?” Colby teased.

“Are you calling me an idiot?” I questioned, frowning at him, but I was teasing.

He snorted. “I can tell you bullshitting me.”

Laughing, I nudged him with my elbow.

“Thanks.”

Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

I thought the jealousy was out of my system until the next day at school when I was getting ready to leave. It was just Colby there to pick me up and this time one girl was there, flirting with him. It was Madison, a girl who was one of the more stuck-up students in school.

She always gushed whenever Colby and the rest of the rugby team came to Aspen School. I knew she had a crush on him and since she found out he was going to be my mate, she’d been giving me death glares.

“Let’s go, Colby,” I said coldly as I approached.

He smiled weakly. “Yeah, I’ll talk to you later Madison.”

“Excuse me, Lia I was trying to have a conversation,” she said to me.

“And we have to get back to the house,” I reminded her. “You know, because Colby is my future mate and lives with me now.”

Madison turned red with anger. “Oh, you think you’re so special just because you have four mates? Well, let me tell you that you don’t deserve any of them. You especially don’t deserve Colby!”

“Hey Madison, that’s uncalled for!” Colby shouted. “You may not like the fact that we are together but it doesn’t mean you can treat Lia like that. She is my future mate.”

She sighed. “Yes, I’m sorry Colby.”

“You are such a bitch,” I blurted out, not regretting it one bit.

Gasping, Madison turned towards me and shoved me hard. I stumbled back a bit but was able to catch my balance. Growling, I went up to her and shoved her back. She looked shocked that someone would dare retaliate. Everyone treated her like the queen bee of the school and I was sick of it.

Simone and I had spent many an afternoon trashing her to each other, unable to understand why everyone fawned over her so much. It was time someone taught her a lesson. I never thought it would be me, but things change.

“How dare you!”

She rushed towards me, but I was ready. I might look small and harmless, but I grew up with an older brother who taught me to fight. The other guys taught me in their way as well.

Around us, people were shouting and/or cheering. I clawed at her, trying to even bite her. But then the fight was stopped when I felt a strong arm wrap around my waist and lift me away.

“Lia, stop! She’s learned her lesson!”

Colby set me down, causing me to snap out of my anger. I looked at Madison who was on the ground, holding her bloody nose. She had several scratches and cuts, and some of her clothing was torn.

Had... Have I done that?

“Let’s get back home,” Colby muttered, ushering into the car.

The school was going to reach out to me and Michael. I was above age now, but he was still listening on the papers as my guardian now that my parents were gone. When he found out what I did, he was going to flip out, but I couldn’t bring myself to feel that upset about it.

Madison got what was coming to her. If I hadn’t been the one to do it then someone else would’ve been the one to attack her. I just beat them to it.

I called Michael, pressing the phone to my ear while pacing the kitchen. He picked up almost immediately.

“Lia? What’s going on?”

“I got into a fight,” I said.

There was a pause. “You what?”

“A fight.”

“With whom?”

“Madison,” I snapped.

“Madison? Why? What happened?”

“She shoved me so I shoved her back. She’s been all over Colby for weeks, Michael. Flirting, touching, acting like I’m invisible -like he’s not my mate!”

“Hold up,” he said, and I could hear him shuffling around like he was sitting up. “You fought Madison because she was flirting with Colby?”

“Yes!”

“Lia, are you serious right now? You’re about to graduate. Do you want to get expelled this close to the finish line?”

“She deserved it,” I muttered. Latest content published on Find★Novel.net

“Even if she did, you can’t just go around fighting people. You know that, right?”

“She shoved me first!” I argued.

“Oh, great, that’ll make the school board feel so much better,” he shot back. “Lia, come on. Use your head. What were you thinking?”

“I was thinking that I’m sick of her trying to act like Colby’s available when he’s not!”

“And Colby? Did he say anything to her?”

“He didn’t even notice. He’s too nice to tell her to back off.”

“Of course, he didn’t. That’s Colby.”

“Exactly! Someone had to do something.”

Michael sighed. “You really couldn’t just walk away?”

“No! She was practically glued to him. Right in front of me, Michael! How would you feel if someone did that to Gabriella?”

He groaned. “Okay, fine, I’d be pissed too. But I wouldn’t risk getting expelled over it.”

“Yeah, right.”

“I wouldn’t!”

“You’re telling me you’d just let someone act like that and do nothing?”

“No, I’d handle it. Calmly. Like an adult.”

I snorted. “Yeah, sure. You’d probably throw the first punch.”

“I wouldn’t,” he protested, then added, “Not unless they deserved it.”

“Exactly.”

“But that’s not the point!” he said quickly. “The point is, you’ve got to be smarter about this. You can’t just fight every time someone flirts with your mate. You’re better than that.”

“She slapped me first!” I repeated.

“And you slapped her back.”

“Yeah. Hard.”

He sighed again, longer this time. “Lia, listen to me. You’ve got to pick your battles. Let Colby deal with it next time.”

“He won’t.”

“Then tell me, and I’ll deal with it.”

“You’re not even there!”

“I’ll make time,” he said firmly. “But you can’t risk everything over someone like Madison. She’s not worth it.”

I exhaled sharply, pacing faster. “It’s fine. I handled it.”

“Sure, you did. What’s the damage?”

“Nothing major.”

“Your hand?”

“It’s fine.”

“Lia.”

“It’s fine!”

“Uh-huh.” He paused, and I could practically hear him rolling his eyes. “Ice it anyway. You’ve got a mean swing, and I’m guessing your knuckles are sore.”

I didn’t answer.

“Lia,” he said again, his tone softening. “For what it’s worth, I’m proud of you. Reckless as hell, but proud.”

I stopped pacing. “Really?”

“Yeah,” he said. “You stood up for yourself. And for him. But seriously, don’t do it again. Promise me.”

I hesitated. “No promises.”

“Lia-“

“Bye, Michael.” I hung up before he could say anything else.

When the email came in that night, I knew my brother was going to be pissed.

Subject: Suspension Notice for Lia Brown

Dear Lia and Michael Brown, I am writing to inform you about a recent incident involving Lia that has resulted in disciplinary action. Following an altercation on school grounds, Lia has been found in violation of Aspen School’s strict zero-tolerance policy regarding physical altercations. We deeply regret that this step has become necessary but must prioritize the safety and well-being of all students and staff members.

Summary of the Incident

Yesterday Lia was involved in a physical altercation during school hours. It has been determined that Lia’s actions constitute a serious breach of our code of conduct. As outlined in our student handbook, physical violence of any kind is strictly prohibited, and disciplinary measures are implemented without exception in such cases.

Disciplinary Action

Effective immediately, Lia is suspended from attending classes on campus for the remainder of the school year. She will instead transition to Aspen School’s online learning program to continue her academic progress. This program is designed to ensure that Lia remains engaged with her studies and fulfills all her academic obligations.

Next Steps

1. Online Learning Transition: Lia will receive instructions on accessing her online courses, along with a schedule of classes, assignments, and deadlines. Aspen School's technical support team will be available to assist with any login or platform- related issues.

2. Parental and Guardian Support: We encourage you to maintain close communication with Lia's teachers and counselors throughout this transition. Our school counselor will be available to support Lia emotionally and academically, as adjusting to online learning can be challenging.

3. Reintegration Plan: While Lia will not return to campus this school year, she is expected to adhere to all academic guidelines and complete her assignments as scheduled. Failure to comply with the requirements of the online program may result in additional consequences.

Guidance and Counseling

We recognize that incidents like this can be deeply upsetting for all involved. To support Lia's emotional well-being and growth, we recommend scheduling regular sessions with our school counselor. These sessions can help Lia reflect on the incident, understand its implications, and develop strategies to manage conflict constructively in the future.

Acknowledgment of Suspension

To confirm your acknowledgment of this disciplinary action and to receive further guidance regarding the online program, please contact the school administration by Monday. We are here to answer any questions or address concerns you may have.

At Aspen School, we are committed to fostering an environment of respect, safety, and academic excellence. It is our hope that this experience serves as an opportunity for growth and reflection. We remain dedicated to supporting Lia's education and personal development through this process.

Sincerely,

Aspen School Staff

Well, at least I wasn't expelled.

Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

I was having to grapple with the fact right now that I was starting to fall for my mates. It wasn't something I wanted to happen, but it was happening. For weeks now we had been living together

and they had been acting on their best behavior. All of them were trying their best to get me to warm up to them.

The rain was funny, constantly making me laugh. Colby made me feel grounded, and always willing to have good

conversations with me. Meanwhile, Jesse made me feel safe as if I could tell him anything. Then there was Matt who had the hardest time with it.

He and I were more alike than I realized. The two of us had deep conversations with Matt actively responding whereas Jesse preferred to listen. There was a balance between all of them and now I see why they were such good friends.

It didn't help that the other day I had gone ahead and started a fight. While we were wolves, it wasn't encouraged for us to get into fights while on the school grounds. If there were any serious injuries then they face charges of some kind or get sued.

I was lucky that I hadn't faced any major consequences. It sucked that I was going to have to finish school online, but the more I thought about it the more I realized it was probably good if I was staying home.

The school was almost over! At least this way I didn't have to see my classmates.

To think, I would be graduating soon. I was excited to get to college. Just as I was getting there, the four guys would be graduating themselves. They were likely to go on the state rugby team or other rugby teams around the area.

For a moment, I feared that they might end up leaving out of state, but there was little chance of that happening. We were going to be a pack. No one was going to ruin this or try to break us up. I smiled to myself, feeling a warmth overtake me.

They were going to be my family. Michael would always be my family as well, but this was me forging ahead and making a pack of my own. You know, provided we did create our pack. I might even end up going ahead and joining one of the other guy's packs.

But then the nervousness would kick in and a part of me was horrified at this change of thinking.

What the hell was going on with me?

Well, that wasn't completely true. I think I knew what was going on with me. It was my growing feelings for these four who were my mates. I was grateful I had come to accept that this was my future, but it was jarring when I thought of how my mindset was back when this started.

"Hey Lia, we're trying to figure out what to eat!" Rain shouted through my closed door, forcing me out of my thoughts. "Do you have anything in mind?"

“I think I’d like some pizza.”

He laughed. “Good, I was hoping that you would go to get some pizza. Come down and we’ll figure out what to order.” “All right, I’ll be down there soon.” Content originally comes from Find★Novel.net

I didn’t want to keep them waiting. A group of hungry alphas were not going to be the easiest to get along with. But I was also pretty hungry myself, having skipped lunch so I could finish as much work as I needed to.

Was I working too hard? Probably, but graduation was around the corner! I wanted to make sure I graduated with a good final report card. It was going to look good at the college. Sure, I already applied but I was a perfectionist in that sense.

“Lia, hurry! Rain is looking like he wants to eat the cardboard,” Colby shouted from downstairs.

I sighed and shook my head. “I’ll be right there!”

The feelings didn’t go away. They became worse. I kept letting it interrupt my daily life and Simone sat me down when she

was over one day. My mates were off at the college for practice. Their big game was coming up within a week or two, and I was going to be there.

Simone poked me. I jumped.

“What?”

“You dazed out again.”

“I did not daze out.”

Simone rolled her eyes. “Lia, are you seriously going to deny zoning out? You’ve been doing that all day!”

I wanted to deny it but I couldn’t because she was right. This was exactly what I was doing.

“Fine, I’ve been zoning out.”

She grinned. I knew she was going to ask me about it now and wanted to know what was going on with me. It was important for me to tell her. For one, she was my best friend, and two, I was also needing to get it off my chest and say it out loud.

“Okay, spill it,” Simone said, flopping onto my bed. “You’ve been zoning out like a lovesick pup all day.”

“I’m not lovesick,” I shot back, crossing my arms.

“Right.” She smirked. “So, what’s been on your mind? Chemistry? Trigonometry? Be serious, Lia.”

I sighed, flopping back against my pillows. “It’s complicated.”

“Complicated?” she echoed, her grin growing wider. “You’ve got four stupidly hot mates who practically worship the ground you walk on. That’s not complicated-that’s the dream!”

“They used to torment me, Simone!” I sat up, my frustration boiling over. “How am I supposed to process that? One minute, they’re teasing me mercilessly, and the next-“

“They’re drooling over you?” she cut in, laughing.

“I hate you.”

“No, you don’t.” She scooted closer, resting her chin on her hand. “So, what’s the deal? You can’t stop thinking about them, can you?”

“I don’t know!” I groaned, covering my face with my hands. “Maybe? Sometimes I want to strangle them. But then Jesse gives me that intense look, or Matt says something sweet, and suddenly...”

“You’re melting.”

“I am not melting!”

“Oh, please.” Simone grinned. “You are so melting. You’re falling for them, aren’t you?”

“Ugh!” I threw myself back onto the bed. “I don’t know! Maybe. Yes. I don’t know! It’s so confusing. One minute, I’m mad, and the next...”

“You’re imagining yourself in their arms?”

“Simone!” I sat up, glaring at her.

“What?” She shrugged, completely unbothered. “I’m just saying what we’re both thinking. Look, it’s okay to feel confused. This is a lot to take in. But you’ve got four alphas who seem ready to do anything for you. That’s not anything.”

“Do you think so?” I asked, “My voice quieter now.

“Oh, absolutely,” she said, nodding. “Rain practically tripped over himself to check on you in the cafeteria. And Jesse? That guy looks like he’d fight a bear if it so much as look at you wrong. Honestly, it’s kind of hot.”

“Not helping.”

“You’re smiling, though.”

“No, I’m not.” I tried to keep my lips from twitching.

“Lia, you’re allowed to take your time with this,” Simone said, her voice softening. “But maybe just maybe you could let yourself enjoy it a little. Let them show you how much they care.”

I sighed. “I’ll think about it. But if they drive me crazy, I’m calling you to come save me.”

“Deal,” she said, grinning. “Although, I’ll probably show up just to laugh at you falling head over heels for Rain’s smile or Matt’s jokes.”

“You’re the worst.”

“And yet, you keep me around.”

Simone went home just before the guys came home. I was lying there, staring out my window and watching the raindrops splatter against the cool glass.

The fear was gone. I realized that a while ago, but it was difficult for me to admit. I got up and sat on the chair right in front of the window, just allowing myself to enjoy the sight of the rain.

Some people might hate the rain, but I loved it. It was relaxing to listen to the pitter-patter of the rain, the sound lulling me into a relaxed state. Two cars pulling into the driveway broke me out of my relaxation, a soft sigh of disappointment escaping

me.

The guys were home now. I wasn’t disappointed to have them back, but I was enjoying the peace. It was a change to go from living with my brother full-time to four rowdy rugby players. They were often here, hanging out with my brother but it wasn’t the same as them living here.

“Hey Lia we’re home!” Rain shouted up the stairs before letting out a cry of pain. “Colby, my dude, why did you smack me?” “Do you think she can’t hear us? She probably heard us slam the front door-thanks to Matt.”

Matt huffed. “Oh please. I was just shutting it. Is it my fault the door shuts so loudly?”

“Hey, can we focus on the fact that I am in pain right now?” Rain pleaded.

I sat there, ready to break out into a fit of laughter. They could be so ridiculous at times, but I realized I had adjusted to living with them more than I thought I had!

“She’s likely laughing at us right now,” Jesse said simply. “I would to if I was capable of laughter.”

Rain whimpered. “I don’t want to hear you laugh, Jesse. If your smiling is scary then your laughter is going to be worse!”

Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

I woke up to Rain blowing up the group chat we had with each other. Sighing, I hopped on and decided to see what he was fussing about.

We need to figure this pack situation out. Mom called me, and apparently, the council gave us a six-month deadline to decide.

– R

Six months? Seriously? I thought we had a year. – C

Nope. Law changed. It’s six months now. R

Great. Just what I needed. As if dealing with my current pack’s drama wasn’t enough. – M

Wait, so we must decide between joining one of your packs or making a new one? – L

Pretty much. The new pack requires five members, which we have. But it’s not that simple. – R

Nothing ever is. – J

Look, the Iron Fang elders are breathing down my neck about bringing you all in. But I know that’s not ideal for everyone. – C

Yes, not happening. No offense, Colby, but your pack’s as nervous as they come. M

Okay, so Iron Fang is off the table for Matt. What about Celestial Howl? – R

Hippie vibes aren’t my thing either. – M

And Ashen Howl is a nonstarter. No way we’re going there. – J

I'm sensing a theme here. – L

Which is? – C

None of you like each other's packs. – L

...She's not wrong. – R

What about making our pack? A fresh start, no old baggage. – M

Would that even work? – L

It's possible, but it's a lot of responsibility. We'd need a territory, a council rep, and probably a hell of a lot of patience. – J And trust. We'd need to trust each other completely. – R

Trust isn't the problem. My issue is whether we can make it work. We barely agree on lunch orders, let alone pack politics. – M

I don't care which pack we join or if we make our own. I just want us to decide so Lia isn't stressed out. – J

Thanks for the vote of confidence, Jesse. L

I'm just being realistic. – M

Realistic is fine, but we need solutions, not sarcasm. – C

I agreed. Let's each think about what we want. Lia, it's your call too. You're the omega here. – R

Oh, thanks for the pressure, Rain. – L

He's not wrong. Your comfort matters most in this. – J

Look, I don't know yet. I just don't want any more fighting-or for this to turn into a competition between your packs. – L

Fair. Let's table this for now but agree to talk again soon. – C

Works for me. – R

Fine. – M

Sure. – J

Thanks. I appreciate you all for not turning this into a battle royale... for now. – L

For now. R

To make matters worse, we got an official letter from the werewolf council.

To: Colby McGrath, Rain Kim, Matthew Clark, Jesse Johnson, and Lia Brown

From: The Werewolf Council

Subject: Urgent – Final Notice Regarding Pack Affiliation

Dear Colby McGrath, Rain Kim, Matthew Clark, Jesse Johnson, and Lia Brown,

We hope this letter finds you in good health and with clarity of purpose. As you are aware, the formation and affiliation of packs are essential components of maintaining balance and harmony within the werewolf community. Our records indicate that your group, bonded during the recent mating cycle, has yet to finalize your pack affiliation.

Under the governing regulations of the Werewolf Council, newly mated groups are required to declare their pack affiliation within six months of their bonding. This framework is designed to ensure that all werewolves have access to the resources, structure, and protection necessary to thrive.

Your Options:

1. Join an Existing Pack

If you opt to join one of your original packs, all members of your group must come to a consensus about which pack will serve as your home. Each pack offers unique resources, traditions, and responsibilities, and it is vital to consider which environment will best support your collective needs. Please note that additional meetings with the chosen pack's leadership may be required for integration purposes.

2. Establish a New Pack

If your group chooses to form a new pack, you must collectively:

- o Select a Pack Name: Your pack name will represent your identity within the werewolf society and should reflect your values, strengths, or aspirations.

- o Appoint a Leadership Structure: An Alpha must be named to act as the primary liaison between the pack and the Werewolf Council. Secondary roles, such as Beta or Sentinel, are optional but encouraged.

- o Submit a Declaration of Intent: This document must outline your pack's purpose, core values, and goals to ensure alignment with the Council's expectations.

Important Information:

The enclosed Pack Affiliation and Registration Form must be completed and submitted no later than six months from now accompanied by all required supplemental documentation. Failure to comply with this directive will result in the Council assigning your group to an existing pack deemed most suitable for your circumstances. Please be advised that this assignment is non-Next Steps:

Enclosed with this letter, you will find the following documents:

1. Pack Affiliation and Registration Form: To be completed with your decision. Updates are released by findnovel.net
2. Territory Maps and Guidelines: For those considering forming a new pack, these materials detail unclaimed regions, restricted zones, and the procedures for submitting a Declaration of Territory.
3. Council Resources and Contacts: A guide to your regional Council representatives, who are available to answer questions or facilitate the transition process.

All members of your group must sign the Pack Affiliation and Registration Form before submission. The form and any accompanying documentation can be submitted via mail, through your regional representative, or electronically at [email address/website link].

A Word of Encouragement:

The decision to join an existing pack or establish a new one is both a privilege and a responsibility. Your choice will shape the foundation of your lives together and contribute to the strength and legacy of the werewolf community. Trust in your bond and the wisdom that brought you together.

We look forward to receiving your completed registration and stand ready to assist as you navigate this process. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any concerns or requests for clarification.

Sincerely,

The Werewolf Council

I sighed. This was not surprising that they were reaching out to us already but I was annoyed that they were being so persistent. Couldn't we have a chance to try and figure out what we wanted to do?

The guys seemed reluctant to talk about this but I insisted we meet in the dining room to discuss what we were going to do. In the end, we mostly just talked around each other. No one could decide about anything or pick one option over the other.

I grew frustrated, slamming my hands against the table.

“Guys, all of you need to get a grip!” I shouted, going so far as to stand up to my full height.

Now, I was short but with them sitting down I figured it could go pretty far if the others were sitting around. When I looked at my mates, they jerked back a bit in surprise. Rain sunk, avoiding my gaze. Even Jesse seemed surprised!

“Sorry,” each of them mumbled at some point. They seemed genuinely apologetic so I wasn’t going to take their difficulty too personally.

But we still couldn’t come to a decision. Everyone did see be leaning towards us creating our own pack, but it was going to be difficult to convince Colby and Rain to completely give up on that idea.

I needed to get out of the house so I met with Simone who picked me up and took us to see the movie *Wicked*. It was something I had been wanting to see for a while.

Simone and I just needed a day where we didn’t have to talk about mates, packs, or wolf matters. I was a wolf-that part would never change, but I didn’t want to spend every waking moment thinking of how much my life had changed.

But the one thing I needed to keep in mind was that it hadn’t changed for the worse. When I first found out I had four mates, I was terrified. I thought my life was over and they were all going to make my life hell but the thing was the guys were genuinely trying. There were bumps along the way, but ... I was proud that they were my mates.

Not that I would ever admit this to them out loud... not yet, at least.

“Lia, are you even paying attention to the movie?” Simone whispered to me suddenly. “You look distracted!”

“Of course I am,” I whispered back.

I had dazed out, but the less Simone knew about that the better.

Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

“So what are we going to do?” I asked the guys, the four of us gathered around the dining room table.

Matt shrugged. "I'm fine with any of your packs since my pack kicked me out."

He said this with the widest grin on his face. I was happy that Matt was no longer suffering from the stress his old pack was putting him under. It was great to see him like this, free and without stress.

"I agree with Matt," Jesse said, taking a sip of his tea. "It's up to the three of you. Matt and I will go with whatever decision you make."

I looked at Rain and Colby. "So what do you two think?"

"I think it's a good idea if we make our pack," Rain said, catching Colby by surprise. "Colby, my dude, don't look so shocked." Colby blinked. "I can't believe that you are willing to walk away from your pack. Not that there is anything wrong with it, but I thought you had your mind set on being with your pack."

"I did, but the more I thought about it the more I realized that it would be good to start our pack. There's no baggage that way and we can start fresh!"

I nodded. "You know what, I agree."

"Really?" Rain asked, grinning. "Okay, Colby it's up to you. What do you want to do?"

Colby swallowed. "I know I would disappoint my pack but I think you guys are right. It's a good idea if we go ahead and create our pack.

Here I was thinking that things were going to be difficult for us. I thought we were going to have to talk about it for a while because this was the type of thing that required a huge decision. But we were all in agreement.

For a while, I thought it was a good idea for all of us to create our pack. Things had been shaky since the four came to live here. I wondered how I was ever going to adjust, but the thing was I did adjust! It took some time but I was able to do it.

Why would we join an existing pack when we could start fresh like Rain said?

But now we had another decision to make. The five of us needed to figure out what we were going to call the pack.

"So what are we going to name the pack?" I suggested, glancing around at everyone.

The rain lifted his hand. "I have an idea." Discover more novels at findnovel.net

"Oh god no," Matt muttered, giving him a look. "I know that you're going to suggest something that is going to make me want to put my head through the wall."

Rain grinned. “Trust me when I say I am going to make the best name suggestion you have ever heard.”

I paled. Matt was right to be scared about this.

The decision had been made. I can’t believe we managed to make this decision after all this turmoil.

My phone buzzed in my hand, Simone’s name lighting up the screen. I sighed, knowing exactly what she was about to ask. I hit the green button and pressed the phone to my ear.

“Hey, Simone.”

“Lia! Finally! Have you all decided yet? What’s the verdict?”

I hesitated, swallowing the lump in my throat. “We... decided.”

“And?” she pressed, practically buzzing with anticipation.

“We’re starting our pack.”

“What?! No way! Are you serious?”

“Yeah.”

“Oh my god, Lia, that’s amazing! I knew you’d do something epic!”

“Epic? It feels more like a disaster waiting to happen.”

“Why would you say that? Starting your pack is a fresh start! It’s the best decision you could’ve made.”

“It’s also terrifying, Simone. What if I screw it up? What if the guys end up hating me for dragging them into this?”

“Lia, stop. You’re not dragging anyone into anything. They agreed, didn’t they?”

“They did, but...”

“No buts. They’re all in this with you. And honestly, they’re lucky to have you leading the way.”

“Leading?” I laughed bitterly. “Simone, I’m the omega. I’m supposed to follow, not lead.”

“Says who? You’re starting your pack. Your rules. Besides, being an omega doesn’t mean you don’t have power. You’re the one who brings everyone together. That’s leadership.”

“I don’t know if I can handle it,” I admitted. “There’s so much to figure out-territory, council approval, roles…”

“One thing at a time, Lia. You don’t have to solve everything in one day.”

“But what if I mess up? What if I’m not good enough?” I

“Lia, listen to me.” Her voice softened, steadying me. “You’re already good enough.” You’ve handled so much-your coming-of-age ceremony, dealing with the guys, standing up for what you want. Starting a pack? You’ve got this.”

“Easier said than done,” I mumbled.

“Of course it is. Nothing worth doing is easy. But you’re not alone. The guys are with you. They’ve got your back, and so do I.” “You think I can do this?”

“I know you can do this. You’re stronger than you think, Lia. And this pack? It’s going to be amazing because it’s yours. No old rules, no old grudges-just a clean slate.”

I couldn’t stop the small smile that crept into my voice. “That does sound nice.”

“It is nice. And honestly? I’m a little jealous. You get to build something completely new. That’s huge, Lia.”

“You don’t think it’s too much?”

“Not at all. It’s scary, sure, but it’s also exciting. You’re making history, Lia.”

“History, huh?”

“Absolutely. And hey, when you’ve got the pack up and running, I better get an invite to visit.”

I laughed, the tension easing a little. “You’re already angling for a guest room?”

“Damn right, I am. You’re not leaving me out of this.”

“Okay, fine. You’ll get an invite.”

“Good.” Her voice turned warm. “And Lia?”

“Yeah?”

“You’ve got this. I believe in you.”

“Thanks, Simone. I don’t know what I’d do without you.”

“You’d probably still be freaking out, but that’s what best friends are for.”

“Love you, Simone.”

“Love you too. Now go kick some ass, pack leader.”

I hung up, feeling a little steadier. Maybe, just maybe, Simone was right.

Then I realized I needed to call my brother. I don’t know if the guys had gotten to it, but I still was going to tell him anyway. Michael answered on the third ring. “Lia, what’s up?”

“Hey,” I said, my voice steady, though my heart was racing. “I wanted to tell you something before you hear it from someone else.”

He sighed, the kind of sigh that came with years of being my older brother. “This sounds serious. Is this about the pack stuff?” “Yeah.” I exhaled slowly, gripping the phone tighter. “We talked about it, and... we’ve decided to start our pack.”

There was silence, just long enough to make my stomach flip. “Your pack?” he said finally, his tone calm but edged with surprise.

“Yes,” I said quickly. “It makes the most sense. None of us could agree on joining one of our old packs, and—“

“Lia,” he interrupted, his voice softer now. “You don’t have to explain. I get it.”

I blinked, caught off guard. “You do?”

“Of course,” he said like it was obvious. “You’ve got four mates. A fresh start is probably the only way to make it work. But...” He hesitated, his tone shifting slightly. “Are you ready for this? Starting a pack is a lot.”

“I think so.” I paused, glancing at the list of things we still had to do. “We’ll figure it out together.”

There was a hum of approval on his end. “You’ll need to choose a territory, submit the paperwork to the council... you know all that, right?”

“We’re working on it,” I said. “I just... I didn’t want you to think I was abandoning the family or anything.”

“Lia.” His voice was steady, warm. “You’re not abandoning anything. You’re building something new. And you’ll always be my sister, no matter what pack you’re in.”

I swallowed the lump in my throat. “Thanks, Michael.”

“Anytime.” He chuckled, a sound that eased some of my tension. “Just promise me one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“Don’t let those guys drive you crazy.”

I laughed despite myself, the weight on my chest lifting just a little. “No promises.”

“So what is the name?”

“Um, that’s one of the problems. We haven’t decided on a name yet,” I admitted with a tired laugh. “We went over a few suggestions, but no one could seem to agree on anything! Rain wanted something ridiculous, which I’m not even going to repeat.”

Michael burst out laughing. “Come on, I need you to tell me. If you don’t then I’ll reach out to Rain to ask him about it.”

“Go ahead and ask Rain. I refuse to say those words out loud,” I muttered, standing my ground.

There were some things I was willing to do for my brother but that was one thing I wasn’t going to do.

“Fine, be that way then little sister.”

I laughed.

The two of us spoke for a bit longer before I realized that I needed to get changed for the day and go downstairs to join my mates for dinner. Well, they weren’t my mates yet but they were now officially my pack.

I smiled to myself. Never did I think I would be so happy about it but I was.