

## The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

### Chapter 151

I **stood** with Maizie just inside the tree line that was to the left of the pack house. Alana was sitting on a blanket, her laptop still out as she looked at wedding things. **Rhys** and I hadn't picked a date yet with everything going on, but Alana had insisted that we start looking at **things**. She had asked if she could help plan, and I needed all the help that I could get. I didn't want to disappoint Rhys if he decided he still wanted to marry **me**.

"You should take off your ring," Maizie said, following my gaze to my hand.

"**Why?**" I asked, hesitant to do as she asked.

"In a real fight, it would probably be advantageous to keep on, but for now, I don't real want to be hit by it or deal with cuts from it. Plus, your fingers are going to swell, and it can get uncomfy."

I nodded, but didn't really understand. If it was a weapon, I should learn to use it. But not only that, I didn't want to take it off. It was something Rhys gave me, and if I took it off, it felt like I was disconnecting myself from him. But I took it off anyway and handed it to Alana for safe keeping.

“I really don’t want to train,” I told Maizie for the hundredth time.

“You have been avoiding me and it **since** you decided to rejoin society. We are training. **It’s** good for you.”

I didn’t **know** who needed this training session more, me or Maizie with the way she **was** talking, but I didn’t get the chance to ponder over it long. Maizie took her fighting stance. Her long hair was pulled into a ponytail, and her all-black skintight clothes, **gave** her a fierce look **that** made me question ever wanting to train with her.

“Come on, Grace,” She prodded. “The grass **is** soft in this area, just like the **mat**. You’re holding yourself back.”

I was. It was me who wasn’t sure she cared enough about anything to fight. But **those** kids, the **ones** Maizie had told me about **were** enough to make me realize that not fighting wasn’t an option.

I **felt** the grass between my toes and centered myself. This was just training. Maizie was not going to kill me but make me **better**, so that the next **time** someone tried, I would be ready.

I steadied myself, and Maizie lunged as soon **as** she saw I was ready. I dodged her **first** hit, but she threw her knee into **my** stomach. I gasped but remained on my feet as she grabbed at my wrists, her nails digging into my skin. I twisted my way out, yanking my arms out of her grip on the weak **side**, throwing my body weight into her. I got two hits in, but she recovered quickly. We were both breathless, but it okay. There was something freeing in sparring with Maizie. It was like power was flowing through me. For the first time in weeks, I felt alive.

I took a sucker punch to the gut, and stumbled back, as she sent another one at my head. I ducked under it, hitting the ground and rolling away from **her**, reestablishing myself on my feet. Holy shit. I had never successfully done that before.

Maizie smirked, but didn't say anything. I didn't need her to know she was proud of me. She lunged again, this time making contact, forcing **us** both to the ground. She had me pinned, her arm at my throat. If this was a real fight, I would be dead already, but she was giving me **the chance** to break **free**.

"Come on, Gracie," She urged, "Figure it out or tap out."

My one arm **was** pinned under me at an awkward angle, and she had my other one pinned **beneath** her **leg** as she **adjusted** herself to have a **better** angle. I thought I could get the one behind me **free**, I just needed to throw her off balance **just a** little bit. So, with all my **force**, I bucked my body, and lifted **my** arm out from under me, gesturing toward her. However, I didn't even make contact before she flew off of me, surprising us both, **as** she **smacked** hard **into** a **tree**, crumpling to the ground.

“Maizie!” I screamed, racing toward her, but the cut on the back of her head was already healing.

“What the fuck was that?” Alana asked in horror, kneeling down **next to us**, as I rolled Maizie into **my lap**.

“Maizie?” I prodded immediately.

**The** younger girl blinked up at me her **eyes** filled with confusion.

“What happened?” **She** asked, sitting **herself** up.

“I didn’t mean to do it. You just flew off **of me!**”

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**Something** suddenly dawned on her, and she narrowed her eyes at me in accusation:

**You didn't** tell me you were Lycan!"

"I'm mean." I stuttered surprised at her accusation. "I can't shift... I've only been told that I'm Lycan. But I can't prone 11.

Her eyes narrowed at me, as if she was trying to figure something out, "Didn't you say you grew up in Red Blood pack?"

"Yea," I confirmed. "My dad was the Alpha till he died. Kinsley is my half-sister." Which was not a fact I liked admitting on either account.

"Wait what?" She looked horrified as she got to her feet, and I got to mine. "Are you the girl who killed Luna Ava?\*

A gasp ripped through me as I stepped back, and pain shot through me like she had physically hit me.

"No!" I panicked. "No. I would never!"

It was so quiet. Nobody moved, and nobody said anything. I could feel the tears pooling in my eyes. No. I would never have killed Luna Ava. She was the only person who had ever been kind to me. She was the only one who had loved me. No. I wouldn't have killed her. I never touched her, but no one would believe me. Oh goddess. It's happening again.

I struggled to catch my breath. No. They would hate me here too. I **was** finally starting to think I would be okay here.

“Grace?” Alana voice called out in question **as** she inched her way closer to me, **a** concerned look in her eyes.

“Grace, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to-”

But I didn't stick around to hear the rest **of** her sentence. **I** couldn't. I had to leave before **they all turned** against me *again*. I took off at a full **sprint**, letting the forest, swallow me whole.

## Chapter Comments

DeliliaLayla

Grace you are running the wrong way!!

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### **The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King**

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

### **Chapter 152**

I knew it **was** bad when Alana's mindlink came in shaky.

"Alpha King?"

“Yes?”

“I was just in **the** forest with Grace and I Maizie, and there was an incident and Grace took off running. Maizie went after her, but I **couldn't** keep **up**.”

“What sort of incident?” I growled angrily. I had let her out of my sight for an hour and here she was getting herself knee deep in some shit already. I swear

if she wasn't my mate, I wouldn't put up with this shit.

Alana whimpered, but answered weakly,

tell

you once you find her. She was quite upset, and I'm worried.”

“Did she shift?” I asked.

“No.” Alana whispered.

I slammed my work down on my desk, furious that Leon had talked me into letting her go be with her friends. He had told me she would be **fine**. This **wasn't** fine!

“Get up. We have to go.” I shouted as I swung his office door open, letting it **slam** into **the** wall behind it.

Both he and Sawyer looked up in surprise, clearly, they had been having a meeting about something without me.

“**Go** where?” Leon asked tiredly.

“To find my mate that you convinced me was going to be fine without **me**.”

“What happened?” Leon asked as they both stood up.

“I don't know. Alana only said that there was an incident, and Maizie **was** trying to **keep** up with her, but she couldn't, and **she was worried** about **Grace**.”

“Maizie was there?” Sawyer asked, his voice laced with panic.

I nodded, already on the move, both of them right behind me.

“Was she hurt?” Sawyer questioned.

“I don’t know. I don’t know anything other than what I just told you. Alana was not forthcoming with information. She just said that Grace took off running after something happened.”

“That’s not much to go on.” Sawyer frowned, his footsteps keeping pace with mine.

“It’s all I have.”

I reached for **Grace** through our bond for the hundredth time since she had disappeared on me, but **there** was still nothing. I hated that she was blocking

1. **me.**

I quickly organized several search parties through/mindlink, and we raced toward where Alana had said she had lost both Grace and **Maizie**.

The brush was thick in this part of the forest. We all split up in hopes of finding my mate sooner rather than later. Where would she **go?** How had **she run** through this part of the forest the **way** she had? Alana had **stated** that they were barefoot

**“Grace?!”** I shouted into the **abyss.**

**My** words echoed off **the** trees, and for the first time I truly worried that these **woods** were not in my full control as **they once had been. I didn’t** want ANYONE to know I was looking for her. That I had lost my mate. **I couldn’t** imagine how that would spread in the **worst ways.** What **would they do to her if**

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**they found her first?**

**I gritted my teeth,** forcing myself to move quietly, shifting so I could hopefully catch her scent.

My wolf was as anxious as I was. He kept urging me to move faster. Not stopping to look at any fallen branches or marks on the **ground, I couldn’t** think **straight** and neither could he. Why would she have ran?

“I think **I’ve** found their trail!” Sawyer shouted through the mindlink.

Thank fuck. I immediately took off toward my brother using our pack bond. I would hopefully catch him. I knew I was faster than him, but I didn’t know quite how **far** away he was from me.

“Gracie, come on, where the hell are you?”

“Their trail leads up here,” Sawyer mindlinked as soon as I came into his sight.

**He was** following a stream that led up to some big hills and rock formations. There was a waterfall up this way if we **were** to keep going, but Grace **had** never been here before. I had never taken her, and it was too far from the pack house **to** explore by herself. And Maizie had eyes on her always, **there** was also no **way** for her to know what was up there either. I mean, I had only been this way a few times in my life. I didn’t like to come up here. There **was** something about it that was eerie to me, **not** that anything would stop **me** now. I mean, **Grace** was in trouble. I couldn’t go **there**. **At** least not **right now**

I shook my head trying to clear my head. I kept catching Maizie’s **scent** on **occasion**, telling me I **was** going the right way, but she still seemed so far **out of** reach.

**Sawyer** stopped beside me, and I wondered why for a moment **before** he mindlinked, “Look.”

My breath caught in my throat, and I tried to breathe. The waterfall was pounding into **the small** pond, but it was in the **space** behind the waterfall that I caught sight of a small figure with blonde hair and her **knees** drawn **up** to her **chest**. Even from here, I could **see the** sobs **that were wracking through** her body. Goddess, what the hell had happened?

I shifted back to my human form and grabbed the pair of shorts that Sawyer threw at me, glad he **was** prepared as always.

“No. No. No.” Sawyer started, his eyes wide, looking not at Grace, but at **the** edge of the waterfall where another figure **was** balancing on the **slippery rocks** edge as she moved toward Grace, her ponytail flopping around behind her.

“Maizie!” He shouted as loud as he could over the roar of the falls. “Get down from there!”

In true Maizie fashion, she looked down at him and gave him the finger before continuing her balancing **act**, moving toward Grace.

“What hell is she doing?!” He muttered, looking at me with wild, panicked eyes.

I didn't say anything because I didn't know. Why would Grace willingly go up there? **Was she** scared? Was someone chasing **them**? Was Maizie not **as** trustworthy as I had thought? Oh fuck. If she was going to kill Grace, it would **be so easy**. One little push... **I** would never make **it** up **there** in time to stop it. Anything could happen, and there was nothing I could do about it but watch in horror as Maizie got **closer to** my small mate, my mate moved to and then, they both disappeared from sight.

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I raced up the rocky pathway to the waterfall, carelessly watching where I stepped, Sawyer hot on my heels. "Grace?" I called out, unable to **keep the panic from** voice.

The thundering of the falls though drowned out my words. There was no sound that could reach her. I tugged at that hand we shared, but **her** walls were as solid as ever.

I started across the slim pathway behind the falls and immediately noticed the entrance of a small cave, I mindlinked Sawyer that I found **them**, and **I** hesitated just outside, listening in on whatever was going on in there, **even** though everything in me was screaming to rush in and find **my mate**.

“I’m sorry I brought up the Luna, Grace, I didn’t think before I spoke. It just surprised me.”

That’s what this was about? I gestured for Sawyer to follow me before I took a step into the cave, but neither of the girls noticed me, Grace was facing the back of **the** cave and Maizie stood just off her shoulder. To my surprise, the cave went fairly far back, I could see two different pathways from here, **but that** wasn’t my concern right now.

“You’ve been nothing but kind to me, I was **just** surprised when you said you **were** Alpha Andrew’s daughter. I grew up hearing nothing but bad things about her you but you’re nothing like that girl. You just took me by surprise.”

-

Maizie said the word surprise, so many times that I lost count. I wondered why it bothered her **so** much. I mean, killing someone was **always** a big deal, and killing a Luna was a death penalty crime, but they had only imprisoned **Grace**. I had thought **it** was **weird** that they had blamed a **14**-year-old for her death, but we hadn’t discussed it, which was weird.

“Grace,” I interrupted. “We’re you ever on trial for the Luna’s trial?”

Both girls jumped at the sound of my voice, and the tears falling down **Grace's face**, broke my heart.

“No.” Grace answered between sobs. “No. I was just thrown in a prison cell and beaten... I didn't even know what happened to her till later, **and I honestly** don't even know the details... Just that she died. She died and it was my fault.”

“But there was no trial?” I persisted.

“No.” Maizie answered this time, looking from Gracie to me, her eyes wide with horror. “No. We were all told that the evidence **was** too **gruesome and** undeniable. That it was being handled in house due to the severity of everything. But to be fair, I was only 11ish at **the** time... **I** wasn't told much about it till I was older, and it wasn't long after her death that I was placed in the program.” Maizie answered. “I wasn't considered old enough to know details. **I just** had been told it was done in jealous rage by Alpha Andrew's bastard child.” Maizie's voice shook slightly, and **I** was reminded that she **was** still just a child.

“Who told everyone this?” I asked, fighting myself to not just rush across the cave and wrap Grace in a hug.

Maizie frowned but said, “Alpha Andrew had a pack meeting. And Kinsley told everyone in school more about it.”

“Isn’t the punishment for killing someone death in your pack?” I questioned.

“Yes.” Maizie answered. “That’s part of why I’m confused.”

“And how did this come up between you two?” I asked with a frown, wondering how we got to this **point**.

“She didn’t tell me she was Lycan.” Maizie answered, sounding more like herself with a bit of accusation in **her voice**.

“How did you find out she was? Did you shift, Grace?” I asked trying to keep the eagerness out of my voice.

“No, no,” Maizie shook her head. “She threw me off of her with her powers, I wasn’t **expecting** it.”

“I’m sorry,” Grace whispered. “I didn’t mean to do it.”

I couldn’t take it anymore. She sounded so broken. I took her in my arms and kissed her forehead. I wanted **her** to know I loved and supported her. I also fully

didn't believe she killed her stepmother. The more I learned about the situation, the more I doubted it. There was so much about that story that just didn't add up.

"I'm not mad you did it, Grace," Maizie said in exasperation. "I'm mad you didn't tell me who you **were**. I also **don't** understand, if you **were** Alpha Andrew's

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**bastard kid, I was** told she didn't have a wolf. So how the hell are you not just a werewolf, but a lycan??

"**Well, I've never** shifted before..." Grace answered quietly, and I could feel her breathing in my scent to help **calm** down

"**No.** That's not what I mean," Maizie's exasperation didn't seem to be easing, and Sawyer took a step closer to her. "Wasn't your mom just a werewolf?"

"**Well,** until recently, I thought everyone was a werewolf," Grace answered in confusion, lifting her head from my chest to really look at **Maizie**. I didn't know Lycan were a thing."

“You didn’t know Lycan was a thing?” Maizie frowned. “But more than half our pack **is Lycan.**”

“**No. I wasn’t** allowed near others, and nobody bothered to talk to me. I only learned about them after Rhys got me out of there and then we learned everything **together.**”

“But **you were** told your mother was a werewolf?” Maizie **pressed.**

“Well, **yea,**” Grace answered uneasily. “But I never knew **my** mother.”

“Why do you **have** that look?” I asked Maizie, noticing her confusion.

“It just doesn’t make sense that’s she’s Lycan when her mom **was** a **werewolf.**” Maizie explained, her brow **furrowing.**

“Well, isn’t it just like normal breeding stuff? She had a 50-50 chance of being either?”

“No.” Maizie stated, looking at us seriously. “It doesn’t. When a werewolf and a Lycan mate, the child is **always** a **werewolf**. **Always**. That’s **part** of **why** **the** program that kids were being put in was created. So that brings me back to my question, how **is** Grace a **Lycan**?”

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DeliliaLayla

I have a feeling Grace is both

DeliliaLayla

Didn’t she told him this already?

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# The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

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Wait what? What did she mean if my mother was werewolf that I couldn't be Lycan? My whole life I had been told that my mother was nothing special. She was just a whore who had taken advantage of my father. It was why Kinsley had hated me. My mother had taken away her chance to have the perfect family My mother had destroyed so many lives by going after the Alpha. A part of me hated her... A part of my just wanted to know why the had done it. I **mean, to** the end it had killed her. Did she find it worth it in the end? Did she resent me? Did she hate me too like everyone else?

“Breathe.” Rhys whispered, resting his head on mine.

He had come after me. I hadn't expected him to come after me. I thought he would just cut his losses. And maybe if I had gotten farther away, he might have, but he came after me. He knew I had killed my stepmother. He knew I wasn't a good person. And he chose me anyways, time and time again.

“Aren't they creating Lycans?” Rhys asked, redirecting my attention back to the conversation at hand.

“Well, yea,” Maizie answered uneasily. “But did Grace go through that process? They only started that aspect of the program recently. They also hated her. So, I’m not sure why they would purposefully give her powers then.”

“I never had a wolf or Lycan.” I answered. “I found out I was bound when I came here.”

“How long were you bound?” Maizie asked, her **face** softening in sympathy.

“My whole life, I think.” I answered. I knew I had had these conversations with Rhys and Sawyer before, but I forgot that Maizie didn’t know everything.

She frowned slightly. “Well, that’s sad,” She answered in the **way** only a teenager could. “But I do think that means you most likely were born and **not** created. Being created is a process that you remember. You can ask Michael about it, but he doesn’t like to talk about it.”

“I mean, the witch said you were Lycan and that you shifted as a baby,” Rhys reminded me.

“You shifted as a baby?” Maizie’s eyes widened in surprise. “That’s wicked cool. And probably why you were bound if you were that powerful, that **young**. Still doesn’t make sense why you’re a Lycan though.”

“Maybe Alpha genes are different?” I offered.

“Maybe...” Maizie answered, but didn’t seem convinced.

“But isn’t Kinsley a werewolf?” Rhys asked with a frown. “If it was just a matter **of** genes, then I would think it would have affected **her** too, but it didn’t.”

“Kinsley is just a werewolf?” Maizie questioned.

“Well, that’s what rumor has told us,” Rhys responded.

“That’s also impossible,” Maizie’s frown deepened. “Both of her parents are Lycan. It doesn’t make sense. So, either we are wrong about something, or Alpha

Andrew, Luna Ava, and Mistress Louanne, were hiding something.”

I buried my head into Rhys’ chest. Why the hell was this all so complicated? Why couldn’t I have been from a normal **pack** with no secrets? Why at 21 years old did I have to find out that everything I thought I knew was wrong? Did I even care? I

never even knew my mother, **so** what does it matter that her story. doesn't add up? Why did anything matter?"

"Well, on that note, we should be going, I'm going to see if Maizie and Michael know anything else that we should be looking into?" **Sawyer** said, reminding me that he was there even though he really hadn't contributed to the conversation at all.

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He gently place his hand on her arm, but she shrugged him off.

"Grace," She started, her voice a little desperate. "I didn't mean to accuse you of killing Luna Ava. I should have known **there was** Especially after everything I have been through. Are **we** good? **Cuz if** we're not, I'm not leaving."

to **the** store.

Despite how I was feeling, a small smile tugged at my lips. It was nice to know someone who wasn't Rhys, related to Rhys or working for Rhys to care so

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much.

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“**We’re good**, I confirmed, **nodding** my head at her.

She smiled and **lifted** her **hand** in a small wave as she turned back to the thundering falls, which was surprisingly **quiet** in here. **Cool**, Fit të për **then?**”

I nodded my **confirmation**, and Sawyer pulled her gently out of the cave with a look of something that I couldn’t quite place that looked to be something **between anger and** worry.

I turned back into **Rhys**, resting **my** forehead on his chest. I wasn’t ready to go back to society. I wasn’t ready to go back and face anyone after **my** meltdown. **Only Alana and** Maizie had **seen** it, but still. It was embarrassing, and I definitely wasn’t ready for whatever lecture I was going to get from Rhys

“**If you’re** going to **yell** at me, just do it.” I mumbled.

**I felt Rhys** chest rumble slightly as he took a deep breath in an attempt to steady himself.

**“I’m** not going to **yell.**” **He** said after a long moment. “At least, I’m trying not to.”

**“Okay...”**

He took a step back from me, and I immediately missed his warmth **as he** ran his hand through his hair. He then **took a small step closer and cupped my face so** I was forced to look at him.

**“Where were you going to go?”** **He** asked, his **voice** on the **verge** of desperation.

**“I don’t know.”** I whispered. “I panicked. I thought that things **were** going to change **to** be how they were **at** my old **pack** when **people** thought that I had killed the Luna... I didn’t want to go through that again... **I can’t** go **through** that again, Rhys. So, I did the only thing I could **think** of and **ran...**

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**Chapter Comments**

DeliliaLayla

Isn't Kinsley "just" human? they had the whole ethan saying it *and* the bookstore thing going on

Danyelle Dempsey-Hale

switched at birth! been thinking it since the beginning

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**Chapter 155**

My words hung between us in a bitter silence. **Rhys** took a shaky breath, and I knew he was trying to control his temper. He leaned forward, resting his hand on my forehead.

“I understand your panic,” he said, his voice shaking slightly as he tried to keep it carefully controlled. “But at some point, Grace, I need you to start trusting **me**.”

I took a step back and looked at him totally taken aback. “I do trust you.” I told him seriously,

“Not enough.” He replied sounding completely tortured. “If you trusted me, you would have ran to me, not away from me. You would have known that what happened in your old pack is completely unacceptable and would absolutely never be tolerated here. If you trusted me, you wouldn’t have me blocked all the time, and I would have found you faster. What if you had been in real danger, Gracie? I can’t lose you!”

“I panicked, Rhys,” I said softly, begging him to understand. “I wasn’t thinking. I wasn’t thinking about anything but getting **away** before it could happen again. And I know that sounds silly. I know. But I wasn’t thinking. That doesn’t mean I don’t trust you... I was just scared.”

“I’m so fucking selfish,” Rhys said frustratedly as he ran his hand through his hair again.

“No, you aren’t. I get it. You want me to be the mate you dreamed about,” I answered carefully. “And I’m sorry that I’m not her. I’m sorry that I’m a mess. I’m sorry that I come with baggage and mysteries upon mysteries, and nothing about my life from before makes sense. But I’m trying... Doesn’t that count for something? We’re both trying...”

He nodded tiredly, pulling me into him. He was holding me like I would just disappear, and honestly, he probably wasn’t wrong in thinking that. I kept leaving him, whether emotionally or physically, I was the problem in our relationship. The amount of fatigue on his face told me that I might be taking years off his life with all the stress I was causing for him.

“Also, I’m not blocking you,” I told him, my brain finally catching up to what he had said earlier.

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A little voice in the back of my head laughed at my statement, but I didn’t quite understand why.

“Well, that makes me feel a little better that you aren’t doing it on purpose... But yes, you are. I can barely **feel** our bond because **your** walls are **up**.”

“How do you know it’s me that’s the problem and not you?” I asked defensively.

Rhys sighed and combed his fingers through my hair. “**Well**, do you **feel** me?” He asked.

“Yes.” I answered.

“And when you reach for the bond, does it feel like you’re hitting a wall and not me?”

“No.”

“Well, that’s what it feels like when I try to feel for you. I can sort of **feel** you, but then it’s like hitting a fucking wall, and I can’t go any further. **I can’t** reach you.”

I frowned. “And you’re sure this is because of me, and not because I haven’t marked you **back**?”

“Well, I could feel you before...” Rhys stated hesitantly, but I realized I had made him nervous by saying I haven’t marked him back **yet**. “But maybe the mark is fading...”

He turned me **away** from him, tilted my head to the side and studied where his **mark** covered the one that had been forcibly put on my skin without my knowledge. I loved having Rhys' mark, but I hated that it **covered** something **so** dark and unwanted. I hated how much I wanted his to be the only one, **even** if we had broken the effects of the unwanted one.

"I don't see anything wrong with my mark," His breath hot on my skin. "But maybe I should mark you again, just in **case**."

Goosebumps erupted over my skin, and Rhys began trace **my** sides with his fingertips. It **wasn't** a threat; it was a promise. A promise **that** I was **his even** when I acted a fool. A promise that I was his, and only his. A promise that I believed.

His mouth found that sweet spot on my neck and a moan escaped my lips, I tilted my head to give him better access. **There** was **little** he could do that I

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**would say no to**. I reached up and entangled **my** fingers **in** his hair. He was **here**. He had **come** after **me**. **No matter** where **I went**, he **would** always find m Because he was **my** mate. He was **my** love. He was **my** everything, and **he** would **always** come after me.

I gasped as he **placed** his hand inside **my** waistband, leaving a trail of **tingles as** he went. I quickly tried to **remove my** pants, embarrassed **at** how wet **my panties** were.

“**No** no, love,” He chided, using his other hand to halt my **process** of trying to strip, pinning **my** arms to my body.

“But-” I looked up at him as **he** fingers travelled down under my panties.

**My face** flushed as he found my clit, and I looked up at him begging for more. I needed more.

“**You didn’t** want **me** to know, you **were wet** for **me?**” **He** smirked. “Too late.”

“Spread your **legs** for **me, love,**” I did as he asked, and it took everything in **me** to stay standing when I **felt** like crumbling from **all** the sensations I **was** feeling.

I tried to pull at Rhys’s shirt, at **my** shirt, there **were** too many layers between **us**, but **my** arms **were** pinned to tightly to **my** body to be **sucessful**. Oh goddess, I wanted him. I wanted him **so** fucking badly it hurt.

“Ah,” I screamed as he hit a particularly sensitive **spot**, I **was as** close to orgasming **as** possible without actually being in **one**.

“Let go, love. Let me in,” He whispered in my ear.

I couldn't say anything, the sensations were too much. I had no idea how I **was** even standing other than Rhys had to be holding me up.

“Let me in,” He pleaded.

And then my shields that I didn't even know I had up, came crumbling down, as my walls clenched, and I fell into pure bliss.

### **Chapter Comments**

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

**Chapter 156**

I held **Grace** firmly against my body as she came down from the high. I would never get tired of making her feel special. I would never get tired **of pleasuring** her. I would never be tired of her.

“That was-”

“Amazing?”

だい

“I was going to say intense, but yes, also amazing.” She answered, turning in my arms to kiss my cheeks.

For the first time in what felt like forever, she seemed like herself. Maybe it was that I could feel our bond fully again. Or maybe it was **that** she was relaxed or at least as relaxed as she ever seemed to get. But either way, I was glad for it it. This was the girl I truly loved. I just wanted her to be happy. Like **this**.

Her lips met mine, and I groaned as she nipped at my lip. I wanted her fully, and my erection didn't lie, but now wasn't the time. It was too cold to go much farther here and I was worried that she was already hyperthermic. Her cheeks were flushed, and whether it was from our moment or from the cold, I **wasn't**

**sure.**

“Are you really not going to let me take care of you?” She pouted when I pulled away.

I reached into my back pocket and flashed her my phone that was buzzing silently, giving me **the** out I needed, otherwise, I wasn’t sure I was going to be able to pull **away** even with my best intentions.

“Talk.” I answered putting the phone on speaker, so Grace could hear it.

“Did you find, Grace?” Arlo’s panicked voice rang through.

“Yes.” I answered in irritation. “I’m with her now.”

“Oh, good,” Arlo breathed a sigh of relief. “**I was** worried.”

“How did you hear about that?” I asked.

“Everyone was looking for her. Someone stopped by my house to **see** if she was here.” He answered, but there was something about it that put me on edge.

“Hi Arlo. I’m fine.” Grace’s soft voice confirmed for him.

“I was told you were with the girl who hurt Sawyer... She didn’t hurt **you**, did she?” He asked hesitantly.

“No. I just had a moment.” Grace answered, but there was a bit of edge in her **voice** now.

“I’m sorry,” Arlo tried... “I jumped to conclusions.”

“If you want to rejoin the research, Arlo, you have to get over this prejudice with **the** kids.” I said tiredly.

“I just think we shouldn’t be just letting them wander.” Arlo hissed, obviously biting his tongue, but doing a poor job of it.

“They are kids, Arlo. Grace exclaimed in exasperation,

“Look Arlo,” I cut in before this could go any further. “Grace will be over in about an hour to resume her lessons. But if you bring up your opinion on these kids again, her lessons will be moved to someone else. Are we clear?”

“Yes, Alpha King.” Arlo said through gritted teeth, and I hung up the call.

Grace sighed and leaned into me a little more

“Is that everyone’s opinion of the kids?” She asked after a long moment, her voice quiet.

“I’m **not sure.**” I told her honestly. “I hope people **can see** past their bias, but I’m not confident in that. At **least** not **yet...**”

## Chapter 156

How do we change that?” She asked earnestly.

“I **don’t** know...” I answered.

“What if we started **making** adoption profiles? And started slowly started integrating them into society? So like maybe the older kids help **with chores** around the packhouse, and the younger kids spend time outside of our suite, playing with kids their **age**.”

“**Gracie**, you know those kids in our suite are all a little weird...” I said. “They’re just starting to feel comfortable and like do normal kid stuff... Is integrating them really a good idea? Don’t you worry that they’ll just get bullied?”

“I do. Which is why we need a strict no bullying policy. But they need normalcy, and they need adults that can give them more than we can. They deserve **to be** kids. We’re putting too much on Caleb and the older kids. They also deserve to be kids too. And Caleb deserves to just have time with his daughter **and** not be in charge of them all the time.”

“Do we trust them all?” I asked hesitantly. There were some young ones that I was fairly sure were harmless, but teens were notoriously hard to adopt out **in** general, but these teens were products of war, and I could only imagine how hard it would be for us to find them homes.

“Keeping them locked up isn’t going to help us trust them, nor is it going to truly let them trust us.” Grace pointed out.

“Okay... Maybe we do it in phases?”

Grace nodded and intertwined her fingers with mine as I led her out of the **cave**. **As** much **as** we both wanted to stay hidden away up here, we both knew we had responsibilities outside of it.

I felt for the bond and **was** grateful to feel that it **was** still very much there and at full **force**. **As** calm, cool and collected Grace seemed to be right now, the inner turmoil I could feel coming from her made me want to not let her **out** of my sight again.

“Bring my laptop to Arlo’s house,” I mindlinked Leon, but I got no answer.

Weird, but I didn’t think much of it. He had been so busy lately there **was** a good chance he might be napping. I had no idea how he was keeping **up** with everything. The kids, Heather, war, it was a lot to ask of anyone.

“Sawyer?” I tried through mindlink.

“Yes?” He replied.

“Have you seen Leon?” I asked.

“Not since we left earlier,” Sawyer replied, “Did you need something?”

“If you aren’t busy, can you bring my laptop to Arlo’s cabin? **Grace** has lessons, and I don’t want to **leave** her.

“I’ll send Maizie with it.” Sawyer replied.

“No!” I all but shouted through the mindlink. “Don’t send Maizie. Arlo still isn’t accepting them.”

Sawyer growled, but I **cut** the link. I didn’t have time for his frustrations when I had my own.

“Everything okay?” Grace asked, bringing me back to where **I was in space** and time.

“I should be asking you that.”

She shrugged. “I don’t know.” She answered honestly. “But I think I will be. Thank you, by the way, for coming after me... I think Maizie **and** I would have figured things out once I stopped panicking, but it was nice to know that you’ll come after me **even** when I’m not being rational.”

I stopped, pulling her along with me, pinning her up against the cliff's wall.

“I will always want you, Grace. Please don't ever forget that I need you, okay? Wherever you go. I will be there **to.**”

She leaned in, **kissing** my lips again before starting down the cliff again to whatever the rest of the day held.

## The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

### Chapter 157

I **sat** on the hard wooden chair at Arlo's table, staring out the window. My focus was dismal at best. I couldn't make myself care or **pay** attention to anything. Rhys had set this up before my panic attack, and before he had felt me up, and now I just had nothing left to give. Nothing at all,

“Did you finish the reading?” Atlo asked. He had been doing something in the kitchen, while I had been doing independent work.

I turned my head away from the window and looked at him before shaking my head. No. I hadn't finished my work. I had barely even read the first three words on the page.

"Come on, Grace," Arlo exclaimed in exasperation. "This should have taken you ten minutes at most to finish this, and I've been gone for 20.\*"

"Sorry," I mumbled, turning my attention back to the book I was supposed to be reading.

"Here, I made you a tea to help you focus," He said as my eyes blurred as I stared at the page trying to bring it back into focus.

"Oh." I looked up in surprise when I realized what he said. "That was very kind, but I really don't want any tea right now."

Arlo slammed his hands down on the table causing Rhys to look up from his spot on the couch. "Do you want to learn or not Grace?" He shouted. "Because right now, it doesn't look like you give a damn about learning enough to help us survive \_"

"Arlo-" Rhys warned, closing his laptop.

“What?” Arlo snapped at him, turning so he could see both of **us**. “It’s her fault we are at war in the first place and she’s not even willing to put in the work to help get us out of this mess!”

Tears rimmed my eyes. I **was** trying... Didn’t he **see** I was trying? Did everyone think that of me? I know I had disappeared for a bit of time. I **know** that I had been slow at returning to life, but I was giving everything I had.

“Out of line!” Rhys shot back, standing up and walking toward me.

“You are the Alpha King!” Arlo argued, getting in between the space between myself and Rhys. “You should be pushing her **to** be better! **You** should see through her act!”

“I am not pushing her into anything, and the only **act** I’m seeing through is yours.” Rhys said in dangerously calm voice. “Grace, **come** on, **we’re** leaving.”

I stood up, my whole body shaking. I reached for the bond to see what Rhys was feeling but they **were** so intense that I quickly **pulled myself** out of it. I wanted no part of it.

Rhys reached for my hand, and I took it hesitantly. I didn’t know if his anger was directed at me or not. I mean, Arlo was right. I wasn’t good enough. I wasn’t fulfilling my role as Rhys’ wife let alone as a Luna, let alone as the Luna Queen.

“You’re just going to let her education suffer because you don’t **agree** with what I am saying?” Arlo contended.

“She was learning without your help before. In case you haven’t noticed, my fiancé is very smart, and I **have** no doubt that she will continue to learn and educate herself as we go. This is her last lesson with you, and I will not put her through this again. Thank you for your time, but your services are no longer needed.” Rhys responded coldly, letting the door slam behind him as we headed for the path.

I flushed at his boast of confidence and hoped that I wouldn’t disappoint him. Arlo followed us out, the door slamming again, the sound reverberating all around the quiet woods.

“You. Need. Me.” Arlo shouted behind **us**.

“And that is your mistake.” Rhys replied coolly, his temper a bit more in check now. “I do not need anyone, but **Grace**.”

It was much colder than I remembered it being earlier, but to be fair we had been training and then running, so I wasn’t sure I would have noticed. But maybe it really had dropped in temperature because Alana had been out here earlier with us just chilling.....

“I’m sorry about that, **Grace**, I’m so fucking sorry.”

## Chapter 157

“**Why** are you sorry?” I asked in surprise.

“Because it was my idea to start lessons back up, and Arlo clearly has some grudges right now. I completely led you satray. I **had** no ides he wài cúng là này like that. He never used to question my rule.”

“**It’s** not your fault, Rhys. It’s mine. I’ll do better.” I promised.

“You just need to be you, Grace,” He brought my hand to his lips and kissed it gently, “All I will ever want is for you to just be you.”

I smiled at his kind words. I loved his constant reassurance, but a part of me wished I didn’t need them. That 1 could be confident in whatever i was **whether** he cared or not. I just wanted to be myself, without any care, but I didn’t think I would ever get there.

“**Are** you worried that he isn’t the only one thinking those things?” I asked.

If I was being honest, I wasn't sure I really wanted to know the answer, but I didn't think that was fair if Rhys wanted to talk about it.

Rhys sighed and tugged at his hair, tiredly.

"I'd be lying if I said I wasn't." He answered as **the** packhouse came into view. "But I don't want you to worry about that sort of thing, my love. It doeba't matter what they think, you'll prove them all wrong in the end."

"I hope so," I muttered, looking forward to the warmth of the house **as** we approached.-

"I have a question about earlier..." Rhys said as he opened the door.

**"Okay?"** I answered as we walked into warmth.

However, I never got to hear his question as someone barreled into my **arms**, and my name echoed off the walls.

**"GRACE!"**

## Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

### Chapter 158

I stumbled back a step as Alana threw herself at me, her arms wrapping around my neck.

“Hi. I whispered, taken completely **aback**.”

“**I was** so worried!” She sobbed. “I didn’t know where you were, and I couldn’t keep up, I’m just an omega! I tried, but I couldn’t, and I lost sight of **both of you**, and I was so scared. It took me forever to get back.”

I pulled myself away from my friend, so I could get a good look at her. Her hair was a mess, there were twigs sticking out of **it**, and several strands fell loosely around her face. Her face had dirt on it, and her work clothes were also covered in mud. Her eyes red from all the tears I could only guess had fallen.

“I’m so sorry,” I whispered, pulling her back in.

“I was so scared.” She breathed the confession, holding me so tight as if she was afraid I would just disappear again.

“I’m here now,” I told her. The guilt that was consuming my soul, I thought would eat me alive. Not only for running away from her- and everyone – but also for wasting time at Arlo’s where I wasn’t welcome anyway. “Come on, let’s go get you cleaned up. Rhys, I’ll meet you in your office in a little bit, skay?”

I looked at him as he watched us both with a guarded expression. I couldn’t figure out exactly what **was** going through his head, but I could guess. The idea of letting me out of his sight **with** one of the people that had been with me when I ran worried him. **I** worried him.

I started to walk **away**, guiding Alana toward the stairs, when **Rhys** grabbed my arm, pulling **me** back to him.

“I’m just going to take her upstairs and get her cleaned up. I promise.”

He looked between me and Alana before reluctantly letting **go**, and nodding.  
“**Please** don’t be too long.”

“I won’t.” I assured him, my hand grazing his chest. “I’ll meet **you** in an hour.”

His eyes flicked to mine with the idea of **a** timeline. I didn’t know how long it would take **for me** to truly calm down **my** friend, but I knew it would help Rhys settle.

“I’ll even take her to our room, so you know exactly where **I** am.”

He kissed my hand, and nodded, and I guided Alana up the stairs, past her floor, past the offices, up to the Alpha floor. It **wasn’t** till I was punching in the code to the door, that Alana realized where **we** were.

“Oh, Grace,” She exclaimed. “We shouldn’t be up here... **I** should go to my room.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” I told her, guiding her inside. “My bathroom is bigger. Let me help you.”

She didn’t fight me. Her shoulders just sagged, and I put my hand on the small **of** her back.

“Aunt Grace!” Sammy called out, jumping up from her spot at the counter. “I heard you **were** missing, are you okay?”

“Sammy,” Maizie sighed from her spot at the stove. “I told you not to bring it up.”

Sammy crinkled her nose as **she** looked between Alana and I.

“Are you sure **it was** Aunt **Grace** and not this girl who was lost?” Sammy asked, gesturing to Alana, causing both **Maizie** and **Caleb** turned **and** looked **up**.

“Alana, what happened?!” Maizie exclaimed, but Caleb was already moving **toward us**, his portion of whatever **they were** cooking, **forgotten**.

**Caleb** grabbed Alana’s chin gently, her **eyes** widening at his sudden touch.

“Caleb?” I asked hesitantly.

“What happened?” He demanded, his voice shaking, looking the most unsteady I had **ever** seen him.

## Chapter 158

She **came after me** when I **ran...** She’s been waiting for me to return. I said calmly, unsure of what was going on

He thumbed her cheek gently, pushing the dirt off it before processing what I said and turning on me

“You did this?”

“I - uh, no, not intentionally.

“YOU DID THIS!” He shouted as he shoved me up against the door we had just entered through.

Every eye turned on us, and I wiggled under his grip, but didn't fight it.

"I didn't mean to." I tried, struggling to keep my voice from shaking.

"Caleb!" Maizie yelled, abandoning her post at the stove at the same time Alana yelled, "Alpha Prince!"

I gestured with one finger to Maizie to wait a moment, to see if I could deescalate this without it going any further and getting worse. His eyes flashed red, and I knew I wasn't fighting just Caleb, but he was fighting his wolf for control.

"You. Hurt. Her." He growled.

"I made my own choice to chase after her," Alana said timidly, placing her hand on Caleb's arm hesitantly. "Grace didn't make me do anything."

"You are just an omega." Caleb snarled.

"Drop the just." I said firmly, gathering my courage. "She is capable of anything she puts her mind to, Caleb. Now let me go. Now. And I don't have to mention this incident to Rhys."

Caleb's arms dropped to his sides as he backed away, a look of horror at what he had just done on his face. He looked from me to Alana, then he stared at his hands for a long moment before he took off toward his room without another word.

"Are you okay?" Maizie asked, her voice full of concern. "Should I go get Rhys?"

She didn't call him Alpha King. She just called him Rhys. She always just called him Rhys. And that is what ran through my head after everything, she just called him Rhys.

"No. **No.**" I said shaking my head, trying to gain clarity and come to grips with what had just happened. "I'm fine. Please, no one tell Rhys what just happened. I don't know what that was, but it's fine. I don't want Caleb to get kicked out on my account..."

Maizie looked hesitant, but Alana's eyes kept darting to me and then in the direction Caleb had walked in.

"I'm good." I reassured Maizie who didn't look convinced. "Come on, Alana, Rhys will be missing me soon."

I took her by the elbow, and we headed off to my room to settle and debrief about whatever the hell **was** going on because I'll **be the** first to admit... **I was**

lost.

## Chapter Comments

Eleisha Bromley

another mate bond, caleb has got is second chance mate

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## The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

### Chapter 159

I **turned on the bath**, but Alana **just** stood in the doorway, her eyes stating unfocused at the **running** water. **Today** had **clearly** taken its **toll** on my friend **and I was** grateful that for **once** I got to be there for her because she had been there for **me** in some of **my** lowest moments. She was struggling **right** now. **because** of **me**, and I hated it.

I **gently** tugged at Alana's shirt and pulled it over her head, but I honestly don't even think she noticed. She just let me undress **her like a doll**. I left her bra and undies on for both of our comfortability. I then helped her into the bath gently, adding in my favorite bubbles that Rhys had gotten **me**

"Oh." She mumbled as the water submerged her body.

"Too hot?" I asked, gently.

"No." She breathed.

"Good." I answered, grabbing the soap.

I helped my friend clean-up. Slowly she started to become a little more with it, especially **as** I helped her scrub her hair.

"Grace?"

"Yea?"

“Thanks for being a good friend.”

I scoffed. “I’m the reason you’re in this mess.”

“No. I made my own choices. But I just care about you a lot. And I’m sorry.”

“Why are you sorry?” I asked in surprise.

“For everything.” She whispered.

“You have no reason to be sorry,” I told her seriously.

“I’m sorry about your Luna, **Grace**,” She said so softly that I barely heard her.

“It was a long time ago.” I answered uneasily, my hands frozen in her hair.

“Was she kind?”

I felt a small smile tug at **my** lips. “Yea.” I answered. “She **was**. She was the only one who **was ever** truly kind to me.”

“What about your dad?” She **asked** gently.

I hesitated before saying, “He **never** cared for me. I was just a nuisance to him honestly. It only got **worse** after the Luna died. He blamed me, and I was thrown in the dungeon till his death. After his death, I don’t know if it got worse exactly **because the** dungeon was pretty miserable. Even once I was ‘released’ from it, I was **a -uh**,” I struggled to find the right word. **Well**, actually, I **knew** the right word... I just I hated the word, but I said it anyway, “Slave, I guess. I worked all the time, but I slept in the dungeon when there was **time**. They used me **however** they wanted. I spent most **of my** time terrified. But it was all I knew.”

“That’s terrible.”

“As I said, it was all I knew. There **is** nothing I can do to change the **past**.”

“If you didn’t kill the Luna, Grace, then who did?”

“**I’ve** wondered that myself for a long time.” I told her honestly. “But I **don’t** know. I don’t know if any **part of their** stories **were true at all**. **Sometimes**, wonder if maybe I lost control somehow and did it, but I **don’t** remember anything of **the** sort, and

I **have** no idea **why I would** have **attacked** the **only woman** who had **ever been** kind to

mg:”

## Chapter 159

**Alana nodded** before **sinking down** into the tub to rinse her hair. I knew that it had been nearly an hour already since I had left Rhys and **promised** to hot be **too long**, but Alana needed me. And I didn't really mind that she had questions. I didn't talk about **my** past life often, **but** she was **my friend**, and it was a **part of** me. There was no reason I should be proud of the scars I wear now because they only prove that I am a survivor.

**Alana's** head popped back up, and I got up to grab her a towel and some clean clothes. My clothes would be a little tight on her, but they **would** do for now

I opened the bathroom door and jumped in surprise to see Rhys lying on the bed with a book in his hand.

“Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you, but I got worried being so far away.”

I rolled my eyes but smiled. “You we're just one floor below me.”

“**As** I said, too far.” He answered with a smirk of his own as I moved to the closet to grab clothes. “How’s Alana doing?”

“Better,” I answered. “**We’re** just chatting right now. She seems more herself.”

“Good,” Rhys answered, coming up behind me and kissing my neck. “I’m glad to hear that.”

I pulled **away** from him, unable to hide my smile at all. He made me **feel** alive in ways I **never** dreamed possible. I **never** thought I would ever be able feel half of what I felt now, and now that life seemed several lifetimes away instead **of** just months.

“I will meet you in your office, Rhys,” I stated firmly. “I promise I won’t be too much longer.”

Rhys sighed and grabbed his jacket off the bed. “Okay, okay, I get the hint, but don’t make me wait too long or I’ll be back.”

I rolled my eyes but nodded anyway. I would have never dreamed of calling an Alpha dramatic before. I would have rather died than allow that thought to have crossed **my** mind... But with Rhys it **was** different. With Rhys everything was different. And to me, he was dramatic.

I walked back into the bathroom with clean clothes for Alana. She smiled at **me** slightly, her cheeks flushed with embarrassment **as** she **wrapped** the towel around her.

“I’m sorry to cause so much trouble.” She said, taking the clean clothes from me.

I turned around to give her some privacy.

“Don’t apologize. I’m sorry I got you into this mess. I’m still trying to wrap my head around everything. I mean it’s all changing **so** fast; it’s like **my** brain can’t keep up sometimes.”

“I get that.” Alana responded gently. “It’s a lot to ask of anyone.”

“I do have something I want to ask you though,” I said hesitantly

“Go for it,” She answered, tapping me on the shoulder to tell me I could turn around.

I grabbed the brush on my counter and began to gently comb through her long-tangled hair.

I took a **deep** breath, nervous that this might ruin our friendship, but I needed to know. “What is going on with you and Alpha Prince **Caleb?**”

### Chapter Comments

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

### Chapter 160

A blush rose to **Alana's** pale cheeks, and her **eyes** met mine through the mirror.

“**I** don't know.” **The** words were barely audible, but I heard them just the same.

“**You** don't know?” I replied in surprise. “I don't mean that I don't believe you, it's just that that was a

pretty strong reaction he had.”

“I know.” **She** whispered. “**It** surprised me too. Ever since he came back, it’s like something has changed.”

“Did you know him well before?” **I** asked uncertainly.

She shrugged, turning around to face me, taking the brush from my hand and putting it away.

“**I** wouldn’t **say** well, exactly.” She responded hesitantly. “When we were little, he and I used to play together. We grew up in this house, forced proximity, ya know? We were the best of friends for a couple years. We never went anywhere without each other. He’s a couple of years older than me, and eventually girls became uncool to him, even if **we** were just friends. Used to be friends didn’t seem to matter either because he then became one of my biggest bullies for a long time. I’m only an omega. Most people now are kind about it, but growing up, everything’s different. I **was teased** relentlessly, and because Caleb was Caleb, well a Prince, doing it, the other kids didn’t hesitate either.”

She paused a moment taking **a** deep breath.

“When my mom died, Caleb changed again. I was 18 at the time. He **was** one of the few people who went to her funeral. He stayed with me that whole **night**, never leaving my side. It **was** the first time I had seen him **as** like a human in a long time. After that night though, things very **much** went back to being the same. He didn’t bully me very much anymore. He just ignored me. We were 18 and I was just beginning to work here at the packhouse. I **have no proof of** this, but I think

he's the reason I got the job on Alpha floor. I didn't **see** him very much, I worked closer to Alpha King Rhys, but I had never **had** too many interactions with Alpha King Rhys when we were younger. Even from a young **age**, they didn't play or hangout together. I actually **can't** even **recall** a time **I ever** saw them in the same place with the same people, unless it was formal event hosted by their parents. They **were always** forced **to** attend those and pretend they didn't hate each other."

I smiled at the idea of a young Caleb and young Rhys. We rarely talked about the past because for me it **was so** dark, and I didn't like to talk about it, unless **we** were trying to uncover something from it. And Rhys wasn't big on sharing... But I did want to know all these things. I wanted to know about his childhood, his parents, his siblings. I wanted to know it all.

"Anyways," Alana continued. "That's pretty much how things went until he got banished. He surprised me when he came **to say** goodbye. I mean, I guess he

a part of **me was** really didn't **have** any friends, he had driven most of them away, and I probably wouldn't have considered myself a friend to him, but grateful that he had thought of me like that. And I really hadn't seen him **very** much since he's been back, but he's **several** times **he's** asked **me** to help him with things that he really didn't need help with, which has been... odd."

"**Have** you ever been romantically involved with him?" I asked hesitantly.

She looked at me in surprise, her face turning a wild shade **of** bright red.

“**Once,**” She answered, clearly embarrassed. “I **was** one of his many one-night stands. **It was** right after the **funeral** for my mom.”

“You’ve banged a **Prince?**” I teased.

“Oh my god. **Stop** it right now.” Alana **gasp**ed in mortification.

I smiled.

“**Well,** he’s acting **like someone** who has a thing for you.” I told her.

She rolled her **eyes**. “He **is** not. He’s acting like a fool.”

I laughed at her boldness, and I couldn’t disagree. “Wanna come with me to Rhys’ **office?** We’re doing research, and **you’re welcome** to join.”

“No,” She shook her head. “I wouldn’t be good for that.”

“Oh **come on,**” I **waved off her** concern. “It’ll be fuunnnn.”

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The look she leveled me made me laugh.

kay, probably not fun, but at least we'll be together?

Alana rolled her eyes, linking her arm through mine as we headed out to the bedroom. To both of our surprise, Caleb was leaning up against the wall. waiting for us.

“Can we help you?” I asked in annoyance. I might have been trying to keep calm before for Alana’s sake, but that didn’t mean I appreciated how he had treated me railier...

“wh.” He cleared his throat, “Came to check on you. Both of you.” His eyes flickering from Alana to me.

I looked at Alana trying to gage where she was at with this conversation, but she looked to flustered too.

“We’re both fine, thank you.” I answered for both of us.

“I wh was wondering if I could talk to Alana alone for a minute?” He asked nervously, his eyes not leaving Alana now.

I also turned to my friend. I would not take away this opportunity for her if she wanted to talk to him. She had told me their history, but there definisy seemed to be more now.

Along moment of silence hung over us before she gave a single nod.

“Do you want me to wait for you?” I asked, not wanting to leave her if she didn’t want me to.

“No.” She said softly. “It’s okay. I’ll catch up with you later.”

“Okay.” I hesitated, giving her arm a little squeeze before unlinking myself from her. “Come find me before you go to bed. I’ll be in Rhys’ office for a while.”

She nodded hesitantly, but didn’t say anything, and I left her alone wondering if I was doing the right thing.

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