



## Chapter 22

"Does it matter?" Waylon asked.

"It does to me." Taking a sip of my beer, I continued. "I made the mistake of thinking you would protect me. Then, because of the mate bond, I starting thinking you would finally be the one to save me. My heart was hoping so but I was foolish. I should have just ran away again."

"He would have still found you and then when he was ready, he would have brought you in. Face it, you were on borrowed time." Waylon muttered.

"Sometimes ignorance is bliss. At least I was happy. Even if it was a fake happiness."

"Why are you so hell bent that you don't get a happily ever after? Why can't you just let me help you, if not to just give you a chance at freedom?" Waylon leaned forward and studied me.

"And be in your debt? To watch my mate refuse to reject me so I will have to feel him betray me for the rest of my life?"

"I won't be betraying you if you accept me." Waylon leaned back against his chair and finished off his beer before tossing the empty can in a pile with other empty cans.

"What do you want me to do? Fall at your feet and thank

you? Invite you up to my room to fuck me? Let you mark me?" I didn't know what he wanted from me.

"Have faith in me. Stop being so damn stubborn and trust me."

"I see." Finishing off my own drink, I did the same by tossing it in the pile.

"Lilith will be here tomorrow. I am staying the night and us three will have a meeting about what is going to happen next." Waylon sighed.

"Did you fuck Lilith in your past?"

Waylon looked taken aback by this but nodded. "She wanted something more and I said no. We broke apart on bad terms and I was honestly surprised she took my call but that doesn't change the fact that she is the best lawyer you could have."

"Well, it's not like I have anything to lose." Grabbing another beer and opening it. I wasn't fully ready to go to bed yet.

Waylon's eyes watched me open my beer and curl up on the chair. It was like he was studying me. "For what it is worth, if I can get you freed, I do want you as my mate."

"If I can get you freed..." I repeated. I knew he felt bad but it was the truth. Not like he could mate a convicted murderer or someone on the run.

"Please understand this from my point of view." Waylon said.

Waving him off, I was done with this conversation. "I'm not talking about us." There wasn't an us but whatever.

"I'm not sharing a room with her." Waylon said after a minute. It was a question I was begging to ask but not sure I was ready for the answer. "I'll respect your wish and not talk about us anymore but I do have something to say in return. I am truly sorry for how this turned out. I can't say that enough but I am also not going to keep apologizing for this either. You can either let me help you or you can keep blaming me for how your life turned out." Waylon got up and started walking away before turning back, "I think you are worth saving." My eyes met his as water filled them. He watched one tear escape before he turned around and went inside. Quietly shutting the door behind him.

Taking another long sip, my head rested against the chair as I scooched further down so I was basically laying in the chair. The stars were shining brightly above me. Maybe I was being a bitch to him. It was part of the brick wall I had built in order to protect myself from this life. Slowly, my eyes started to close as the beer swarmed around in my head.

#### Waylon POV

I wanted to slam the door so fucking bad but I didn't. Instead, I walked away like I didn't care. That tear ran down her face was the hardest fucking thing I have ever walked away from. My arm wanted to wrap her up in a hug to comfort her but she wasn't ready for that. Somehow, I have



to knock down this wall she built.

Papers covered the coffee table and the couch, making it annoying to find a place to sit. As I started picking them up, I realised what they were. There was dozens of pictures. The terror in their eyes was captured so perfectly. It was like they were looking straight at me.

"She spent all day doing that." Arlo came out of the bathroom. I was so lost in them that I forgot he was there.

"All day?"

"Literally, all day. I assumed she would draw for an hour or so but no. She sat in the same spot. It was like she needed to get them out of her head. Her hand was flying across the page. Not even taking a second to think about what to draw. It honestly was impressive."

"She truly has a gift." I was blown away by how realistic these were.

"You have quite the uphill battle." Arlo sat down on a chair and looked at me with a cocky ass grin.

"Excuses me?" I said, pretended not to understand him.

"You know what I mean. That girl is a pistol and she has it aimed right at you. That bullet is not a cupid's arrow."

"I know. I cannot not help her. If she wasn't my mate, I wouldn't have done half the shit I had." Should I have let her find someone else to take over the project? However, her

uncle still knew exactly where she was. "Shit, this all is a fucking mess."

"Ain't that the truth." Arlo bit into an apple with a stupid smirk on his face. Plopping down in the chair, I started to rub my eyes. "You are probably the only guy that can bring her out of this mess."

"Thanks for the load of confidence." I mumbled annoyed. Yay for me.

"Do you like her?" Arlo asked.

I am sure my face resembled the stupidity I thought that question was. "Excuse me? Do I like her? I don't fucking know her but she is my mate. The bond is strong and I feel this sense of duty when it comes to her. I like her spunk and yeah I think she is beautiful but we haven't exactly been able to get to know each other."

"I see, well let me make this easy for you. You don't have any fucking duty when it comes to me! You want me to fucking trust you but you say shit like this! Well, fuck you Waylon!"

My head whipped around to see her standing there. Charlotte's eyes weren't even changed but the rage in them was clear. Looking at Arlo, he looked just as surprised as I was to see her standing there. My mouth opened to speak but nothing came out. Instead, she tried to forcefully stomp away but she was still in pain. The slam of her door told us

how pissed off she was.

Laying back against the chair, my stress level shot up. I thought was I was making progress on getting her to trust me but I just took ten steps back. Damn, when I fuck things up, I fuck it up good.

"Here is a blanket. Goodnight." Arlo tossed a blanket on the couch and went to his bedroom. The other guys had to extend their trip so they wouldn't be back till later tomorrow. Grabbing the blanket, I settled in for the night.

My phone buzzed, waking me up. Opening one eye, I saw that it was Lilith texting me.

Lilith: 30 minutes out

ME: Okay

Fuck, I needed to pee and get up. Charlotte needed to be awake for this meeting as well and going in there to wake her up wasn't on my top then things I wanted to do.

However, I sure as hell wasn't going to send Arlo in there. As I stood up, I felt a kink in my neck from sleeping wrong.

The sun was just above the trees, making the little cabin a little easier to see where I was going. After using the restroom, I grudgingly made my way to Charlotte's room. After a few knocks, I didn't get a response. As quietly as I could, I turned the door knob and peaked in. She was still sleeping so peacefully.

Sighing, my feet moved me until they were beside the bed. I didn't mean duty as like it was a job but I felt like I needed to protect her. It was my job as her mate to protect her. Maybe that is still wrong but it's not like she as allowed me to help much either, or allowed me to get to know her.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, I was able to see her beautiful face. The bruises were just about gone, all the swelling was gone and she was looking as radiant as ever. One small strand of hair was stuck to her eyelash. As my finger gently released it's hold, her eyes opened.

"SHIT!" She screamed as she backed away and pulled the covers over her chest.

"Nothing I haven't seen before."

"Fuck you. What do you want?" Her breathing started to level out.

"Lilith will be here in 30 minutes. I wanted to let you know so you could be ready."

"Great, I'll get ready to meet your fuck buddy who you hired to get your not-wanted mate out of prison. Can you leave now?"

I'm not sure what came over me but I was just fucking pissed off. Tired of her shit. "You know what. Fuck you too, Charlotte! OR should I say Hailey? What should I call you? I mean, you hid who you were, blamed me for how your life is



turning out and I am doing my damnest to get you out of this mess. Yes I called Lilith because I knew if anyone could help you it was her. I haven't seen or heard from her in years and wasn't planning on it either. I would love to sweep you into the sunset and claim you but you know I can't do that right now. Try being a little grateful that I am risking my pack, my beta and my own life to save yours. Yes, I feel a sense of duty to you because of the mate bond. It is only because of the mate bond that we are here today. I'm sorry that our story sucks but what the fuck do you want me to do? I am trying here and you are acting like a spoiled brat. Get some fucking clothes on and get your ass down here. I haven't risked my neck for it to end like this." Walking out, I slammed the door behind me.

"That's it, yell at her and call her a spoiled brat. That's a great way to make her forgive you." Arlo was making a pot of coffee.

"Fuck you too!" I yelled as I slammed the front door shut. I needed to get some fresh air. Walking into the woods, I just went where my feet took me. A fallen tree log was in the middle of the path so I just sat down. What does she want from me? I was trying my best to help her, I just wish she saw that and helped me help her. Should I keep going or just say fuck it? It would be so easy to just say fuck it and leave. Call the authorities and say, here she is! Come get her!

"Waylon?"