

Letters Sent To Eternity

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Chapter 301

41 – Finn

I've been trying to unravel the mystery behind why both the Luna and the Alpha are so secretive about this whole situation. At least Kennedy was straightforward enough to tell me she wants to give us a house—an outrageous offer, yes, but at least something concrete to hold onto. If I weren't feeling so weighed down by everything else, I'd probably be tossing and turning all night, trying to piece together their intentions. But right now, wrapped in warmth and comfort, I feel something I haven't in a long time: like I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be.

I drift off, lulled by the gentle, rhythmic snores of the two girls nestled in my arms.

Suddenly, Trinity's sharp yell cuts through the quiet. "FIIIIINNNNN!!!" I spring off the couch, vaulting over the backrest, ready for whatever's coming. My eyes dart around, searching for the source of her shout, but instead, I'm met with laughter. "It worked, Bennet!" she exclaims, her voice bubbling with excitement.

Bennet smirks, clearly amused. "Someone's a little wound up after sleeping in so long," he teases, ignoring my glare as I blink away the dryness in my eyes. What a jerk.

I spot Bennet and Trinity sitting at the kitchen island alongside Gabriel and Peyton. "Where's Landon? And what was that scream about?" I ask, rubbing my eyes and moving toward them. Since there's no obvious danger, I let myself relax a bit.

"Landon's with the Alpha. You've slept long enough, and the Luna has plans for you now," Bennet informs me.

I glance at Trinity and Bennet, both grinning like they have no idea how much they've interrupted my rest. "What time is it? I feel like I just fell asleep. There were so many interruptions," I mutter.

"It's noon. Kennedy said to leave you alone, but now it's time to pack up and get going," Bennet replies.

"Going? Going where?" Trinity's voice is laced with concern. She leans into my side, and the simple contact soothes both of us instantly.

“Don’t worry, pint-size. You’re coming too. We’re moving everyone to the big pack,” Bennet says.

Trinity’s mood shifts instantly. “What’s the ‘big pack’?” she asks, her curiosity piqued.

Bennet doesn’t miss a beat—he’s really good with kids. “Well, Alpha Ryker helps out smaller packs by making them part of Dark Moon, like this one,” he gestures around. “Oak Lake joined us a couple of years ago. This is the old packhouse of the former Alpha. It’s nice, but you all need more space, so we’re heading to the main packhouse to get settled while we look for anyone else from your pack.”

“Does that mean I get to go to school?!” Trinity’s voice deepens with excitement. “I love school! It was so much fun, and I kind of miss it. What about Gabriel, Peyton, and Landon?”

Bennet laughs. “Yes! You’ll all get to go to school and hang out with Finn, Greta, and the rest of us while you’re here. But first, we have to get Finn out the door.”

Her eyes snap to me. “What are you waiting for? Let’s go!” She jumps off the chair, grabbing my hand and pulling me toward the door.

“Whoa, whoa, wait! I have to get my stuff first,” I say, laughing.

“Nope! We cleaned your room earlier. Everything’s packed in the big car. Come on!” she insists, jogging out the door with my hand still in hers. My long legs keep pace easily, and I can’t help but smile at her excitement. When we reach the long staircase, I scoop her up and throw her over my shoulder. She makes little noises each time she lands on me, giggling harder as we descend.

I’m still wrestling with how deeply I care for this child and how much I want her to stay with Greta and me for good. But for now, I decide to cherish every moment we get with her, no matter what the future holds.

“Hey!” Greta appears around the front of the SUV, smiling warmly at us. “You finally got him up.”

“Uncle Bennet showed me how,” Trinity says matter-of-factly as she jumps out of my arms and climbs into the backseat.

“Let’s go. Landon left with the Alpha and Luna earlier,” Greta informs me.

“So you know where we’re headed then?” I ask.

“Well, I did get up at a reasonable hour,” she replies with a grin, dodging my attempt to tickle her side.

“So, where exactly are you taking me?” I ask as I slide into the passenger seat. Greta settles Trinity into a booster seat I hadn’t even noticed before. Peyton and Gabriel are already buckled in.

“I’m not telling you. It’s way more fun this way,” she says, laughing. The kids join in, their laughter filling the car, and despite myself, I can’t stay annoyed.

Nearly two hours later, after passing through some now-familiar neighborhoods and then venturing into new territory, we finally pull up to a sprawling estate.

“What...?” I breathe, taking it all in.

“It’s amazing, right?” Greta’s eyes meet mine, but I can’t tear my gaze away from the house.

The grand two-story home is painted a soft gray with crisp white shutters framing at least fifteen windows across the front. A wraparound porch stretches wide, with two rocking chairs tucked quietly to one side of the front door.

“Can we go? Can we go?!” Trinity and Gabriel chant from the backseat as Ryker steps out onto the porch.

“Yeah, let’s go!” Greta says, moving quickly to keep up with the kids as they scramble out of the car.

“Hey! What do you think?” Ryker asks as we step onto the porch.

“Think about what?” I reply, still taking it all in.

“Your new house,” he says simply.

“Excuse me?” I’m still waiting for the catch. There’s always a catch. No one just hands over a house without strings attached.

“This is the original packhouse,” Ryker explains. “As we started absorbing more packs, we needed a more central location. But I couldn’t bring myself to tear this place down. My parents didn’t want to stay here—it’s too big for just the two of them, and they didn’t want to maintain a house that no longer hosted guests.”

“And you’re giving it to us?” I ask, disbelief creeping into my voice.

“Yep. You, Greta, the kids, and any other pups who find themselves in situations like yours. No one should have to fend for themselves or endure the abuse Greta went through, or the constant manipulation and instability you faced.”

My jaw drops. I’m speechless.

“Don’t thank me just yet,” Ryker adds with a grin. “There’s some work to do. We’ve kept the house maintained, but it needs updating, and the layout could use some reconfiguring. It’s about a twenty-minute drive from the training grounds, but the land can be expanded if needed. Linda’s already working with our design team to come up with ideas. And feel free to add your own input—this is your home now, brother.” He claps me on the shoulder, and I feel tears prickling behind my eyes, close to breaking down completely.

Greta wraps her arms around me from behind. “So, what do you think?”

I take a deep breath and smile. “I think I’m home.”

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Chapter 302

I’m diving back into the Silver Crescent Pack universe to uncover what’s unfolding in Ben’s world after Kennedy’s departure with Ryker. This story will unfold more slowly, as I juggle this alongside two other projects. You can expect fresh chapters on the weekends, and if I manage to squeeze in a bonus installment midweek, you’ll be the first to know!

Here’s a glimpse into their story:

Ben had convinced himself that his chance was gone forever. Watching Kennedy walk away—leaving for another pack, another male’s embrace, and all by force—was nearly unbearable. She didn’t choose him. Instead, she chose freedom. And though it pained him deeply to admit it, Ben understood why. Kennedy had never wanted to be bound—not to him, not to anyone. She was wounded by the fact that everyone she trusted simply let her go. No one intervened when Ryker claimed her as his mate, as his property. Ben’s heart was torn between the woman he had loved quietly from afar for as long as he could remember and the responsibilities he owed to his Alpha and their pack.

So, he buried his pain beneath his obligations.

Now, as Beta of the Silver Crescent Pack, Ben stands firmly at Alpha Jeremiah’s side, his loyalty unwavering. Their pack is strong, stable, and flourishing under Jeremiah’s leadership. But peace is a fragile thing.

Tensions simmer to the west, where neighboring packs clash over ancient territorial boundaries. What began as minor skirmishes escalates into violent confrontations. When the death toll rises too high, Ben and Jeremiah are summoned to negotiate peace.

It’s during this uneasy truce that Ben sees her.

Elara is like fire draped in silk—stunning, sharp, and exuding undeniable authority. As the daughter of an Alpha, she’s been groomed to lead, raised to command. She is bold, fierce, and utterly untamed. She rejects the idea of mates outright and mocks the notion of destiny. She has her own path to forge, one that leaves no room for the whims of the Goddess.

But fate is indifferent to their desires.

When Elara’s parents are murdered under suspicious circumstances, she is left carrying the heavy burden of a grieving pack—and no male heirs remain to claim the mantle. Though she is the youngest potential Alpha and too young to officially take the throne, she is fiercely determined to protect her father’s legacy from falling into the wrong hands. With whispers of betrayal swirling within her own ranks, Elara finds herself forced to seek help from the very person she once rejected.

And Ben? After a year of numbness, something stirs within him—a spark he believed died the moment Kennedy left.

Desire.

Hope.

A mate's bond reigniting with fierce intensity.

Yet, between Elara's unyielding pride and Ben's guarded heart, fate will have to fight hard to bring them together. Some wounds run too deep, and some destinies come wrapped in thorns. Both have packs to protect and duties to fulfill, with countless obstacles standing in their way.

Can two fractured hearts find strength in one another? Or will pride, betrayal, and the ghosts of their past tear them apart before they ever have the chance?

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Chapter 303

1 – Ben

She's gone. Just like that, Kennedy was taken—snatched away by some arrogant Alpha who couldn't care less about her feelings. He openly admitted he didn't want a mate, yet here he is, dragging her off without a second thought. I know Kennedy wanted out of the pack, wanted to carve her own path, to live life on her own terms and only return when she was ready. That was the plan. We all believed she'd come back. But instead, I had to watch helplessly as she climbed into someone else's SUV and disappeared from sight.

I can sense Jeremiah's gaze burning into the side of my face, but I'm not ready to face him yet. I don't want anyone offering pity or empty words of comfort. Kennedy isn't my mate, I remind myself, but that didn't stop me from hoping she might be someday. She's the only woman in this entire pack who ever truly caught my attention. We never dated, thanks to Jer's strict hands-off rule. Of course, Tommy, Jason, and I found ways to bend that rule here and there. If Jer suspects anything, he's never mentioned it.

It hits me that I've been walking aimlessly until I reach the gym doors. This place holds memories—especially after Kennedy was taken. The four of us went into overdrive searching for her, and there was no way we'd let her wander around without some basic self-defense skills. The gym became our sanctuary, our regular hangout spot after that.

"I figured you'd end up here," Jeremiah says, his voice breaking the silence.

"I'm not in the mood, man," I reply curtly.

"Yeah, well, we've got a job to do, and you need to get over your non-mate leaving the pack. We all knew she'd leave eventually. This just happened sooner than anyone expected..."

“No, Jer, this is different,” I say, frustration creeping into my voice. “We talked about her going to college and then coming back. She can’t come home now. And who knows what he’s going to allow her to do.”

“Ryker’s not a bad guy,” Jer responds evenly. “He was as surprised as we were.”

“Bullshit!” I snap, throwing a punch at the heavy bag. “He had plenty of time to say something before showing up and taking her right from under our noses. She could have said no and stayed, but she didn’t.”

Just then, Tommy strolls in through the door. “Thought you might be here. Need a partner? Oh, hey Jer. How’s our boy?”

“I’m standing right here,” I mutter, but they both ignore me as the door opens once more. I don’t even need to look to know who it is.

“Is he a sobbing mess on the floor?” Jason teases.

“Fuck you!” I snap back, swinging again at the bag.

“Come on, get it all out now,” Jason encourages. “You won’t have time to act like a little bitch once Jer’s mated. We all have work to do to make this transition happen.”

“I’m fine,” I say too harshly, proving their point. The three of them stare at me, waiting for more. I take a deep breath, trying to calm the storm inside. My body feels like a caged animal, pacing uncontrollably. “Why is everyone acting like this isn’t a problem? Jer, he just swooped in and took your best friend. Don’t you have anything to say about that?”

Jeremiah shrugs, his expression unreadable. “No, I don’t. Because if I did, Kennedy would have my balls. She made her choice. And her mate is my brother’s mate. Honestly, it’s probably the best situation we could ask for. She’s not going to some foreign pack. Rayna and Ryker are close, just like Ken and I are. The girls bonded too. She’s not gone forever—just relocated. And we have to accept that. She was ready to run as far away from the pack as she could.”

“That’s not true,” I insist. “She didn’t want to run.”

“She didn’t want to be here anymore,” Jer counters quietly. “We all saw it. That’s why Mom’s been freaking out.”

“She didn’t want to be a burden,” I say softly. “She always planned to come back. She wanted to be useful when she returned.”

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“Well, the situation has shifted, and you’re going to have to adjust your thinking accordingly. Jason is right—we have urgent matters to attend to. Get your mind focused because the transition is underway, and I need you sharp,” he said firmly.

I nodded in agreement. He wasn’t wrong, but I couldn’t deny it wouldn’t be easy to accept.

Elara

“Take a team and patrol the borders. I want a clear report on how many we’re facing,” my father instructed me calmly as he stood beside me.

For months, there had been skirmishes near our borders, but none had directly impacted us—until today. This morning, one of our young warriors still in training was found dead, displayed as a grim warning on our eastern border. It was an unmistakable threat, though the reason behind it remained a mystery.

The two warriors on duty acknowledged the order with a nod and moved to carry it out. My father glanced at me, and despite his composed exterior, I could see the exhaustion etched beneath his calm demeanor.

“Why now?” I asked quietly. “We’ve maintained peace with all our neighbors throughout my entire life. What could possibly be driving this?”

“You, Elara, my dear,” my mother said as she entered the room, radiating the quiet strength of a goddess. An omega followed her, carrying a tray with the familiar aroma of her favorite tea—lavender and mint—wafting gently ahead. My mother’s preferred way of tackling problems was always with a steaming cup of this soothing blend.

“Why me? What have I done?” I mentally reviewed every recent interaction I’d had with our neighbors. Since turning eighteen, I had accompanied my father to all Alpha meetings and negotiations.

“You’re an unmated Alpha female, sweetheart. When your father is gone, you have the right to lead, but some still believe a woman’s place is beside the Alpha, not as the Alpha. You’ve encountered many males eager to claim the role of Alpha, but you’ve turned down all their advances,” she said, smiling knowingly at me. I hadn’t rejected their advances outright—only their eagerness to become Alpha by marrying me. There was a big difference between the two.

“So, you think this is about me?” I asked, glancing between them as the omega set the tea before me.

“It’s a working theory, though nothing concrete. This is the first time the fighting has affected us directly, but there must be a reason it keeps flaring so close to our borders.”

“What else are we doing about this?” I asked, already bracing myself for the answer.

“First and foremost, you and your mother will receive extra protection...”

“Dear—”

“What about you?” I interrupted my mother sharply. She was better at controlling her temper than I was. As a Luna, she naturally kept her cool to maintain peace, but I definitely inherited the fiery Alpha rage.

“You know full well that the target will be me only after something happens to one or both of you. You’re the heir to the pack—and a female. It’s not common, but rare enough to rattle some of the boys,” he chuckled, and I couldn’t help but smile when my mother swatted his arm. “But seriously, we’re not taking any chances. I know you can handle yourself, but,” he glanced around before lowering his voice, “I’m not convinced all the conflict is outside our borders.” His raised eyebrows made the implication clear.

“Fine, but can I at least have Jax and Dev with me? They’re fun company, and I don’t have to worry about either of them trying to sleep with me,” I bargained.

“I’m okay with that. Stay close to the pack house for now. There aren’t any major events you need to attend. I want to get a grip on this situation and determine if you’re truly a target,” he replied.

I rolled my eyes but didn’t argue. I had my own ways of gathering information.

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Chapter 305

2-Ben

It had been several months since any word came from Kennedy. Her calls had been rare and infrequent since she left, only a handful in total, but the silence lately felt unbearable. Deep inside, I sensed something was terribly wrong. The emptiness in my chest had grown heavier over the past weeks, and now with the cold grip of winter settling in, that weight pressed down on me like a suffocating fog. There was an unsettling feeling gnawing at me, something I could almost taste — raw and unmistakable.

WHAM!

“Damn, man! You okay?” Jason’s voice rang out, laced with teasing amusement. “You do realize you’re supposed to defend yourself, right?”

“Shut up.” I snapped, springing to my feet and bracing myself, ready to take him down this time.

“Let. Her. Go!” he growled, punctuating each word with a strike I barely managed to dodge. “She’s not yours anymore.”

That hit me like a punch to the gut. Rage and adrenaline surged through my veins, blurring everything else. I launched myself at him, fists flying, kicks following, each blow a release

for the dread and heartbreak Kennedy's absence had left behind. "That's it! There's our Beta! I knew you still had it in you," Jason cheered, his voice full of encouragement.

I knew he was right. The truth was there, buried beneath layers of pain and denial. I just needed to lock it away, to stop letting her shadow show on my face. Without a word, I turned and left the gym, not daring to glance back. I was painfully aware that my friends had been watching me all along, waiting for the storm inside me to finally break. I had thought I was better at hiding it, but if Jason was giving me grief, I was clearly fooling no one.

After a long, hot shower and a quick change, I headed out to meet my dad. We had to discuss patrols for Jeremiah's upcoming trip to a neighboring pack. Tensions had been rising along the Black Claw borders, and Alpha Rick wanted Jeremiah's take on the situation. Alpha James had already met with him, and they both agreed to give Jeremiah a chance to hear the concerns and work through the problem before all three of them convened. Since Jeremiah was still in transition, and the threat wasn't immediate but steadily growing, it made sense to approach it cautiously.

I was grateful for the distraction. As long as I stayed busy, delivering results, no one could pry into how I was really doing. Everyone knew I was struggling with Kennedy's absence, but I had no desire to talk about it. Forgetting her, moving on—it all seemed impossible right now. Their gentle prodding to open up only made my temper flare. On my worst days, I escaped to the gym, pounding the heavy bag until I could think of nothing else.

"Ben! I need you to talk some sense into your Alpha!" Luna's voice broke through my thoughts.

"That depends on what you call 'sense,' Luna," I replied, raising an eyebrow.

"He won't let me go to Black Claw with you. I have to go! Please tell him he's being ridiculous."

"Why do you need to go, Luna? It's just information gathering."

"Because the alpha's only child is a woman. There's no way I'm letting him near an unmated Alpha female who's the heir to the pack."

"Luna, you don't need to worry. Your mate is completely yours. No one can change that."

"You don't get it. Alpha females are different."

I smirked. "You're an alpha female yourself. Are you saying you'd act differently?"

She shot back, "I'm the second-born, dumbass." Normally, she wasn't this fiery with me, so I knew she was genuinely concerned. "She's the firstborn with no male heirs. Her alpha instincts will be more like what Ryker and Jeremiah experience. With another Alpha male around, it could go two ways. She might see him as a strong mate or as a threat she needs to attack. If I go, I can stop the first," I felt the growl in her mindlink, "and if it's the second, I can keep them both calm enough to talk."

I had no argument for that. Put that way, I agreed with her. I knew Jeremiah was worried about putting her in danger, stepping into a hostile situation with so little clarity about the real problem. My dad nudged my shoulder.

“Make sure you don’t screw up your face when Luna’s giving you instructions you know your Alpha’s gonna lose his mind over.”

“Is it that obvious?” I asked, standing from the table where we’d been studying maps of the borders between Silver Crescent and Black Claw. I was familiar with most of the neighboring packs—that knowledge was crucial for my role as future Beta—but there were also large stretches of unclaimed land where rogue wolves roamed like nomads, careful not to disturb pack life. It was those borderlands that worried us the most.

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“Go and talk to Jeremiah,” my dad instructed firmly.

I rubbed my hands over my face, then ran them through my hair in frustration. “What exactly am I supposed to say? Jeremiah is my priority, but Rayna... she’s his weakness.” The weight of the situation was already pressing down on me, and I hadn’t even fully settled into my role yet.

Dad gave me a knowing look. “Your priority has to be what’s best for the pack as a whole. Think about it—what’s better for the pack: what Jeremiah wants or what Rayna wants? They’re newly mated, so emotions are running high and quick to flare. You also have to consider who will be easier to manage if they end up opposing the decision. Remember, it’s not just about them—it’s about the pack’s stability.”

I sighed and nodded, understanding the complexity but still feeling overwhelmed. “I’m going to talk to Jeremiah. I don’t think Rayna would sneak out and follow us, but if she’s anything like Kennedy...” My heart clenched painfully at the thought of Kennedy’s fiery nature, and I had to cough to steady myself. “If they’re anything alike, she’ll show up unannounced, full Luna pride, to stake her claim over Jer right in front of this alpha female.” Dad just nodded silently, choosing not to comment on my hesitation when I mentioned Kennedy’s name.

I stepped into the packhouse and found Luna Beth and Rayna standing at the kitchen island, surrounded by a cloud of flour as they baked some kind of pastry. Their laughter and chatter filled the room. I waved as I passed through, but the only response I got was Rayna pointing sharply toward the media room. Great. Clearly, I was on her bad side by proxy unless I played along with her wishes. Taking a deep breath, I headed toward Jeremiah.

“Dude, your girl is pissed at me now, and I haven’t even done anything yet,” I joked, patting him on the shoulder before sliding onto the couch.

“She hasn’t even been convinced to change her mind,” Rayna called out from the kitchen, laughter ringing from Luna Beth nearby.

I exhaled, trying to keep my cool. “I don’t like you right now,” I muttered. “We need to take a walk, or she won’t let me get a single word in.” Raising my voice a bit, I added, “Especially when I’m here trying to help—since she asked so nicely!” The girls giggled, which at least reassured me that I was on the right path to easing tensions.

We retraced my steps back toward the front door. Jeremiah paused in the kitchen to press a gentle kiss to Rayna’s temple. No words were exchanged, but the stubbornness in both their stances was clear—they both wanted to win this argument.

“Why can’t she go?” I asked directly, cutting through any pretense that this was anything but a negotiation.

“You know why,” Jeremiah replied tightly. “We don’t know what’s really going on. My father isn’t giving me any guidance, and my mother has been forbidden to get involved. If I knew the exact threat, this would be easy. But since I don’t, I can’t guarantee she won’t be in danger.”

I tried to reason with him. “With you, me, and Jason there, she’ll have plenty of protection. You can’t keep her locked up here forever. She’s alpha-born—if the worst happens, she can defend herself.” I sensed his body tense at the thought, but I didn’t take it back. Danger was always a possibility for her because of who she was. “Besides, your dad wouldn’t send you out if it was that serious. No one learns like that. He wouldn’t risk the pack’s future or your legacy on a training exercise.”

Jeremiah shook his head. “I know all that, but I can’t let her go with the chance she might be in danger. Not yet.”

“So you’re willing to risk her sneaking off on her own, unprotected?” I let the words hang in the air before continuing. “Do you remember what your twin did to make a point?” I avoided saying her name—it made it hurt less, and I hoped it was getting through to him. “Your mate is no different. You’re going into a pack with an unmated alpha female. She’ll want to make sure her claim is secure.” I held up my hands when he started to argue. “She’s too blinded by you to see any danger, and if she goes off on her own, things will spiral out of control. We won’t be able to manage it.”

Jeremiah stopped walking and lowered his head in frustration. “I hate it when you’re right. Tell Jason and Tommy to gear up, and let your dad, Geoff, and Drake know we’re all heading to Black Claw.”

“Where exactly are you going?” I asked, curious.

“To punish my mate. I need to feel like I’m in control of something in this relationship,” he answered with a small, wry smile as he walked away. I smiled softly to myself, knowing I wouldn’t see him or Rayna again until we left.

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Chapter 307

3- Elara

"It's been weeks since any trouble popped up. Why now, of all times?" I snap at my dad, who shoots me a look that says I'm teetering dangerously close to crossing a line. Honestly, I don't care. I'm just three years away from completing my full transition, and my gut screams that I shouldn't be sidelined when it comes to pack matters. The last thing I need is some unfamiliar Alpha swooping in like a knight in shining armor to 'rescue' me. That's exactly the opposite of what I want.

"He's coming as part of his training, just like you, Elara. You need to learn how to cooperate with the alphas from neighboring packs. And just because we haven't had direct issues lately doesn't mean the fighting has stopped. You know that as well as I do. I believe Austin was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, but until we figure out what's really going on, we can't afford to relax. You know this. Don't be difficult, my little warrior." He pats my shoulder in that condescending way he knows I hate, finishing with a wink.

I groan. "Ugh. Fine. You're right, I know you're right." I press my fingers to my forehead, feeling the tension there. He's never steered me wrong before. "I'm just sick of these Alpha jerks coming in, thinking they know better than me just because they have a d*ck, and then assuming I'm some prize up for grabs, ready to submit to them while they're here."

I can hear my father lean back in his well-worn office chair as I pace in front of his polished mahogany desk, letting my frustration pour out. Talking about my s*x life with him isn't weird—it's just how we are. I was raised more like a boy than a girl, and this kind of conversation is normal between us. My mother, on the other hand, knows I'm far from innocent but chooses to pretend otherwise. She's too pure for all that. She was my father's first and only partner, and while she doesn't force her ideals on me, we usually steer clear of these topics.

"I think the last Alpha who thought that way is still licking his wounds—and his bruised ego." My dad's comment makes me fight back a smile. He's boosting my confidence now, but it's funny. That kid had no idea what he was getting into; he tried to embarrass me publicly when I rejected him, so I humiliated him in a duel and told him to come back when his d*ck was bigger than mine. "Alpha Jeremiah is coming with his mate, so you shouldn't have to deal with that nonsense this time."

My head snaps up at that. "His mate?"

"Yeah, his mate. Plus his Beta, Gamma, and Delta. Like I said, this isn't just for your training—it's for theirs, too. They're our neighbors in the Northeast, with a strong group of warriors. If we form an alliance, it'll give us a strategic edge. But I don't think they're here to make that alliance in the way you're imagining. Jeremiah is a good kid. I think you'll find you can be friends and allies—nothing more, nothing less."

I stalk toward the door, still skeptical. "I'll believe it when I see it." I'm less annoyed now, but my past experience tells me that all alphas—except my dad—are arrogant jerks who need to be knocked down a peg before they take a female Alpha seriously.

“That went well,” Dev says, grinning as he and Jax wait for me outside my dad’s office. They’ve been shadowing me for nearly a month now.

“Shut up, Dev.” I roll my eyes as my bodyguards fall into step beside me.

“Looks like we’re heading to the training grounds. Ready to blow off some steam?” Jax teases.

“Not yet. First, we have to prepare for our guests,” I reply. “After that, extra training is definitely on the schedule.”

“Not it!” they both shout in unison.

I roll my eyes again. “F*ck off, you two.”

“We’d love to,” Jax says, smirking. “It’s been a while since your workaholic habits made date nights tricky. But you’re our assignment, and while you’re out and about with the pack, so are we.” He sounds like he’s reading from a manual.

“Don’t act like you two didn’t sneak off this morning after breakfast.” I laugh over my shoulder.

“Quickies don’t count, and you know it,” Dev whines.

I do know it. Maybe that’s part of my problem—it’s been a while for me, too. “Maybe after the guests arrive, we can call it an early night. I promise I won’t leave my room, so you can have the evening off. Just don’t break anything or make too much noise this time.” They both grin without a shred of shame.

Though both my friends are big and intimidating, Devon is the softer one, especially when it comes to Jaxon. They’re like Yin and Yang. We’ve been friends since elementary school, back when I started realizing people would use their kids to get close to my dad. Jax and Dev were nothing like that—they kept the selfish morons away. When they found out they were mates, I worried I’d become a third wheel, but they’ve never made me feel like a burden.

“I think the noise is good for you. You can’t find better inspiration—especially with the little pencil d*cks you take to bed,” Jax jokes, laughing as he dodges my playful backhand.

“Well, you won’t share, so I have to make do,” I shoot back.

“You won’t share your mate either, baby. Because he’s going to have to be one hell of a stubborn, balls-of-steel brute to put up with you,” Dev laughs, running down the hall toward the guest wing, Jax hot on his heels. I start to run after them but slow down, giving them some space. I’ve been monopolizing all their free time with this pack business. Yeah, it’s their job, but that doesn’t mean they should have to sacrifice every moment to babysit me.

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Having a mate like that sounds incredible, but my circumstances just won't allow it. Being alpha-born means I'm almost certainly destined to be paired with an alpha who expects a Luna to stand loyally at his side, offering unwavering support. That's not how I'm built, though, nor is it how my parents raised me. I'm an only child, a consequence of a tragic accident during a raid when I was very young. My mother was unable to have more children after that, but instead of sheltering me or treating me like fragile royalty, they taught me to be independent—a fighter, an Alpha in my own right. I honestly don't think I could ever play any kind of submissive role, even if I tried.

My father had given me the responsibility of preparing for our guests. He wasn't exaggerating when he said the training was meant for me as much as for the visiting alpha. If I'm going to lead alone, I have to handle the duties that my parents usually share between them. I locate the omegas assigned to the guest wing and instruct them to ready six rooms. Four of these are designated for the Alpha and his mate, his Beta, Gamma, and Delta, with two extra rooms set aside just in case they bring along additional warriors. At the end of the hallway, we left Jax and Dev alone in the last room. With our heightened senses, I couldn't miss the unmistakable sounds of pleasure echoing from behind the door. And honestly, those noises aren't unwelcome—they do come in handy when I need a little distraction.

About half an hour later, when they finally emerge, freshly showered and fully dressed, I can't help but roll my eyes and laugh.

"You two owe me big time. You're lucky we were prepping these rooms for guests—Marge would have a fit if she caught you messing up her perfectly staged setup," I tease, leaning against the doorframe opposite their room.

Jax smirks, giving Dev a playful squeeze. "Don't pretend you weren't enjoying our little sinful show. We could always put on an encore just for you."

I shake my head, trying to keep my composure. "I didn't get off—I had work to do. Now, thanks to you, I'm both horny and unsatisfied, and I have to entertain a bunch of men who will probably be able to smell that on me." I pause, considering. "Maybe I'll take you up on that offer after all."

Dev grins mischievously. "Unless you end up taking one of them to bed instead. You never know—some of these guys might actually be hot."

The last few alphas and their entourages who have visited were decent enough to look at, but something was always off about them. Usually, alphas are the biggest, most imposing figures in the room, followed by betas and so forth. But the recent visitors seemed small, almost insignificant. It's rare to find an alpha without that commanding aura to back up their confidence. Honestly, I'm pretty sure my d*ck was bigger than both of the last alphas who came through here.

"We should bet on it," I joke, leading us back toward our rooms so we can all get ready for dinner. Our guests are expected to arrive within the next couple of hours.

“Deal. If one of them convinces you to take him to bed, we want front-row seats—or at least to listen in,” Jax says with a sly grin.

“You guys have some interesting kinks for gay men,” I laugh, though I understand what they mean. There’s something undeniably hot about being a voyeur—but only with everyone’s consent, when they know you’re watching and actually perform for you. It’s another reason we’re bonded the way we are. I’ve never wanted to sleep with either of them, but the idea of listening in? That always gets me, and they definitely know it.

“Elara, a moment, please,” my mother calls gently. The three of us pause as she approaches.

“You two can go get ready. Jeremy’s on gate duty and will let us know as soon as they arrive,” she says.

Without hesitation, Jax and Dev head to the bedroom they share next to mine.

“Hey, Mom, what’s going on?” I ask.

She looks at me with concern. “I wanted to check in on you. You’ve seemed more agitated lately. I know these attacks and the increased number of guards aren’t ideal, but these are the precautions a leader must take to protect their pack. If you were to get hurt or worse, it would weaken us all and leave the pack vulnerable.”

I sigh deeply. “I know. It just sucks having people everywhere and still feeling completely alone. Or having people underestimate you just because your reproductive parts are internal instead of external.”

She smiles warmly. “I understand. It’s part of what you were born into. Now go get some rest. Jeremiah was delayed starting his training this morning,” she adds with a wink.

I think about heading to the gym alone but decide against it. I don’t want to deal with the inevitable protests from my dad, Jax, and Dev. I’ll need my energy to socialize properly when the guests arrive—apparently, this is my show to run.

As I step into my room, my eyes catch a gift placed right in the center of my mattress. I laugh softly—they know me too well. I pick up the pink silicone vibrator with a delicate butterfly attachment and head to the bathroom for a long, relaxing shower.

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4 – Ben

I still don’t fully understand why organizing a trip to a pack just an hour away demands weeks of preparation. The sheer number of protocols and formalities is overwhelming, making my head spin with details. We had to negotiate everything—from securing protection to agreeing on how and when we could enter the pack’s territory. But beyond

that, there were unexpected complications none of us anticipated. Alpha James and my dad had us poring over maps late into the night, searching for potential ambush points where rogue wolves might strike, and marking all the locations where previous attacks were reported. By now, I probably know the borders of Black Claw almost as well as I know our own pack's territory.

The more they explain, the clearer the picture becomes, yet it doesn't ease the tension. We're told to take all this intelligence with a grain of salt—trust what we see, but don't dismiss the warnings either. Since the discovery of a young warrior displayed at their far western border, no new attacks have occurred, but Alpha David remains convinced that the root of the problem lies in his daughter's recent transition to leadership. He insists this isn't over by a long shot and promised to elaborate once we arrive. That vague threat does nothing to calm my nerves. I like to have a plan and be prepared; having crucial information deliberately withheld feels like a form of torture to me.

"Ready?" Jason's voice pulls me out of my thoughts as he steps into my dad's office, where I'm hunched over the maps again.

"As ready as I'll ever be," I reply, rubbing my temples. "Something about this whole situation feels off. I can't quite put my finger on it. I don't think we're walking into immediate danger, but there's definitely something strange going on."

"Yeah, I feel the same way," Jason admits with a nod. "We've got our plan and orders. Let's just get this over with. Alpha David expects us before dinner. Come on, help me find our Alpha and Luna—they've disappeared again." He chuckles, and we both know exactly where they've gone, but neither of us is eager to interrupt their private time.

By the time we hit the road, the group is restless. Jeremiah and Rayna are still tense, locked in a quiet disagreement about her safety. Her attempts to distract him haven't helped much. Meanwhile, Jason, Tommy, and I have had too much time to imagine every worst-case scenario possible. But according to our fathers, this is the best way to learn—by diving headfirst into the deep end.

The drive itself is surprisingly pleasant. We rarely venture to this part of the pack's territory because Alpha David seldom requests aid. From what I've gathered, his pack is calm, small, and generally pleasant neighbors. This makes the recent attacks on his borders all the more unsettling. The forest trails here remain unpaved but are well kept, clear of debris. As we reach the heart of the pack, the houses grow older but are meticulously maintained—the kind of place my grandmother would choose to retire.

Pulling up to the pack house, I'm caught off guard. After all the descriptions we've been given about this pack, the grand mansion unfolding before us is nothing like I imagined. The building is an old-world stone structure with multiple layered rooftops, giving it a sprawling, stately appearance. It looks like it could comfortably accommodate ten families. I've never seen a house like this before, but I've heard that older Alphas like to display their status and wealth through their homes. I can only hope Alpha David's personality isn't as imposing as this mansion.

We park our two SUVs at the base of the grand staircase leading to the front door. As we step out, four Omegas are waiting to greet us. Great—this is going to be a prickly welcome. The lead Omega offers a formal greeting and escorts us inside to show us to our rooms, while the others gather our luggage and follow behind. I'm not sure how I feel about strangers carrying my bags for me.

Inside, the interior is all dark wood and old-world elegance. A massive staircase lines each side of the entry hall, leading to the upper floor where a full wrap-around balcony overlooks the space below. The Omega guides us up one of the staircases to the guest wing, where we're told to freshen up. Someone will come for us in an hour to take us to dinner.

Jason, Tommy, and I tease Rayna and Jeremiah, joking that an hour isn't nearly enough time for a quickie, earning a few smirks in return. Despite the tension, we try to keep things light—at least for now.

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They both chuckle at us, and Jeremiah's mindlink cuts through with a confident, "Challenge accepted."

By the time we settle down for dinner, the only people present in the room are the omegas attending to us. There's no sign of Alpha David, Luna Margaret, or their daughter anywhere. That absence stokes a fire of irritation within me. I despise the pretentiousness of deliberately arriving late, especially when it's my own Alpha who caused the delay. Yet, I can't be entirely angry—maybe this is partly on us. My emotions feel scattered lately, more so than usual. Since Kennedy left, I've been quick to snap, but this feels different, deeper somehow.

Just as that thought crosses my mind, the door at the far end of the dining room swings open. Entering together are a stunning woman and a commanding Alpha whose aura I can sense even from here. Both wear smiles that seem genuine.

Alpha David appears genuinely pleased to see us. Judging by the grandeur of his packhouse, I'd have expected irritation for wasting his time, but instead, he looks welcoming.

"I'm so glad you could make it," Alpha David says warmly. "I know the timing isn't ideal, especially since you've just found your mate, Jeremiah, but it's unavoidable. We need to understand exactly what we're dealing with." He strides over, shaking Jeremiah's hand firmly before pressing a kiss to the back of Rayna's hand, which makes her giggle softly.

After the introductions, Jeremiah raises a brow. "I thought we were meeting with your daughter as well?"

Luna Margaret exchanges a brief glance with her husband. "She's detained for now. Not exactly thrilled about needing assistance from another pack. Typical of a trueborn Alpha."

Jeremiah chuckles knowingly. "I can relate to that very well."

We all take our seats, and as I settle in, I scan the room with a growing sense of unease. The omegas are the only other occupants, which strikes me as unusual. Normally, when foreign wolves visit, at least one warrior is present to provide a protective layer. You never know when a peaceful meeting might suddenly turn hostile. My wolf stirs restlessly in my mind, crawling beneath the surface since we crossed the territory line. My instincts flare, but I can't pinpoint the cause. Alpha David seems unconcerned, and his senses are sharper than ours combined.

I inhale deeply, trying to soothe the tension coiling inside me. Just as calm begins to settle, a prickling sensation runs down the back of my neck, and the hairs stand on end. Someone is watching me. I glance around casually, trying not to look obvious, and my eyes lock with a woman standing in the doorway through which Alpha David and Luna Margaret entered. My heart skips a beat. No way. This can't be real. What am I supposed to do now?

"MATE!" my wolf screams inside my head, panic and disbelief swirling together. My mate can't be the alpha heir of this pack.

"Oh dear, I'm so glad you could finally join us," her mother says with a sharp edge of sarcasm, clearly displeased by her daughter's tardiness but unwilling to call her out outright.

"Alpha Jeremiah, Luna Rayna, Beta Ben, Gamma Jason, and Delta Tommy," Luna Margaret announces, listing off titles with practiced ease, "let me introduce you to our daughter, the future alpha, Elara."

Elara smiles, stepping fully into the room. Two large warriors flank her closely, one on each side. So that's why she was late—escorted by these imposing guards. My lungs feel tight, and I struggle to steady my breathing. My wolf growls low in my chest, restless and uneasy. I take another deep breath, exhaling slowly, but I can't tear my eyes away from her. She blinks once, then turns, heading to the seat beside her mother, completely ignoring me. How did she manage to dismiss me so thoroughly while I remained frozen in her gaze? What just happened here?