

## Chapter 21 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

I was so good to be home. I felt at ease knowing that I could control the security around the pack grounds and protect Alaia.

After our afternoon shower, Alaia was quickly kidnapped by Kimmy and my mom and taken off to Goddess only knows where.

I took the opportunity to head to my office and catch up on some pack work.

When I arrived, I was pleasantly surprised to see that Matthew had taken care of everything in the absence of Kade and I.

I sent him and Kade a quick mindlink asking them to come to my office for an overview of the last few days.

The two arrived about 5 minutes later.

Kade knocked twice before walking in, a huge grin on his face.

“What’s the point of knocking if you’re just going to walk in anyway?” I ask.

“I do have some manners Alpha, geez.”

I ignored his comment and looked over to Matthew.

“You’ve done an amazing job keeping the pack running while Kade and I were gone. I’m grateful for all your hard work.”

“Thank you for that Alpha, but you brought our Luna home. It is I who is grateful to you.”

“Hey! I did shit too!” Kade states, with a comical look of frustration on his face.

“Sometimes I swear Pretty Boy here is out for my job.”

“Don’t worry Kade, no one’s a better pain in the ass than you are.” I reply.

“Anyway, Kimmy and my mom have taken Alaia off somewhere and I figured now would be a good time to go over the revamped security measures.

“Matt, you’ve been briefed on the situation with Alexi. I don’t think he’s be dumb enough to step foot into my territory and try to take my mate, but we’re better safe than sorry.”

“Yes, Alpha. I’ve ordered that we triple our presence along the perimeter, thus giving us visibility to the entire border at all times.

Patrols have been advised to not allow anyone to cross without permission from one of the three of us.

I’ve also consulted with the elders in regards to the possible dark magic at Alexi’s disposal. They are checking the ancient scrolls to see what can be done in that regard.”

“Well done Matthew. I looks like you’ve covered all our bases. I’ll follow up with the elders as well as the border patrols just to reiterate the importance of all of this.”

We spoke for another 30 minutes before we went down to begin the bonfire.

The three of us walked through the woods towards the small clearing that that had become the pack's unofficial bonfire spot.

When we arrived we saw that there were already dozens of pack members gathered collecting wood and other supplies.

They truly seemed excited to finally meet Alaia, and I was overjoyed.

As I helped pile more wood onto the fire I felt a small hand brush down my back and immediately smiled.

I turned around expecting to see the face and my beautiful mate but instead I came face to face with Francesca, a one time mistake who had made it her mission to become my Luna.

“Francesca, keep your hands off me. And what are you doing here?”

“Aww baby, why wouldn’t I be here? The whole pack is talking about how you will be officially introducing me as your Luna. Of course I’m here! I’m actually surprised you put this together for us, I wasn’t at all prepared.” She hooked her arm through mine and sent a fake smile to a few pack members giving us confused looks.

I felt Alastair begin to growl with agitation before I removed her arm.

“Francesca, you’re not my Luna, you never were. I’m here to introduce my mate Alaia to the pack, she is our Luna. You and I were a mistake, it happened one time and will never happen again.”

She again stepped up to me, pressing her breasts to my chest and reached up to touch my face.

I caught her hand before she could touch make contact and took a step away from her.

Francesca didn't give up and again moved forward, this time wrapping her hands around my waist.

"I've seen this 'mate' of yours, she's just a child, Xander. Can she even handle you in the bedroom? We both know what a beast you can be. I can take it, and much much more. Just give us another chance, I can be naked and ready in your bed in 15 minutes. Please, Daddy?"

She made her point by standing on her tiptoes and whispering the last few words directly into my ear.

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Alaia step into the clearing, her eyes locked directly on Francesca and I.

Hurt and betrayal and what I thought may have been anger flashed across her beautiful face before she turned and walked away.

FUCK!!

Alaia POV

\*\*\*Flashback, Before the Start of the Bonfire \*\*\*

I'm sitting in the dining hall of the watching Kimmy and Katherine bicker back and forth about the most recent string of expletives that came out of her mouth.

"Kimmy, as a lady and the daughter of an Alpha, you have to present yourself in a certain light. Calling someone a 'shit-eating asshat' is completely inappropriate."

I quietly giggle at the memory. Some guy accidentally bumped me while we were walking in the mall causing the smallest drop of my Caramel Frappuccino to spill on my hand.

He immediately apologized and offered to help me clean myself up, but not before Kimmy ripped into him as if he had set me on fire or something.

"No one disrespects my sister and Luna like that, mom!"

Katherine, clearly seeing that the conversation was going nowhere, raised her hands in surrender and stepped away.

"I'm going to find your father, maybe he'll have better luck." She warned before disappearing around the corner.

Kimmy then turns to me and asks, “Alaia, you’re like me. It’s impossible to live up the ‘perfect’ standard of being an Alpha’s daughter, right?”

I do understand where she’s coming from. Until my mom stepped in and insisted I train with the rest of the pack, I thought my life would just be one of hosting parties and shopping.

But I also understand the importance of putting your best face forward. It’s hard to make someone respect you when you don’t carry yourself respectfully.

“Kimmy, I love that you’re a kick-ass type of girl. It keeps people from thinking they can walk all over you. But you also have to remember that a persons' impression of you can last forever. You just have to think a bit before you rip someone a new one. Maybe they made an honest mistake and could use a pass.”

“Uggh Alaia!! Why do you have to already have amazing Luna qualities?” She says with a mock scowl on her face.

“Did someone call me?” I hear an annoyingly high pitched voice say.

Kimmy balls her hands into tight fists and my curiosity is instantly peeked.

As if here to satisfy this curiosity, in walks a wanna be Barbie Doll reject carrying the scent of too much cheap perfume with her.

She stood about 5’6 and had bottle blond hair, mud brown eyes, a terrible spray tan, and eyebrows that looked like a toddler drew them on.

Her lips were painted bright red to match the too short skirt and tube top she was wearing.

If she had had any curves to speak of, they would have all been hanging out but she had a figure more closely resembling a Jenga block than an hourglass.

“I heard you call for your Luna, Kimmy. It’s about time you start showing me some respect.”

Kimmy scoffs and says “Fuck off Fran, you’re nobody’s Luna but everyone’s mistake.”

Fran seems hurt by the statement but quickly recovers when she says, “Oh really? If that’s the case, then why is Xander having a bonfire to officially introduce me to the pack? I knew he couldn’t stay away for too long.”

I feel a sense of rage begin to bubble within me causing Amethyst and I to let out a low growl.

It’s as if she’s just now seeing me because Fran finally lifts her eyes to meet mine before saying, “And who is your little friend, Kimmy. You know that once I’m Luna, I won’t allow to you keep bringing home your strays.”

Amethyst fights to take control.

“That bitch! Kill her, she’s trying to take our mate. Kill her!”

I remember the advice I had just gave Kimmy a few minutes earlier and take a few deep breaths.

“Fran is it?” I ask her.

“Actually, it’s Francesca but you-“

“So, Fran. I’m Alaia. And trust me when I tell you that I’m far from a stray, I am Xander’s chosen mate and the future Luna of this pack. If you’d been listening better when you heard about tonight’s bonfire, you would have immediately known that it couldn’t have been you the pack was speaking of. It’s clear that you have a ‘reputation’ so why would Xander need to introduce you to someone who is already painfully well aware of your existence?”

I don’t know what you think you had with Xander, but please understand when I say that he is MINE. You will stay away from him if you know what’s good for you.”

Amethyst was clawing to tear this chick apart and I knew she could see it.

I saw fear flash in her eyes for a moment, my words had hit home. But she wouldn't give up that easily.

“Oh, you sad pathetic little girl. It’s not what I had with him, it’s what I have. He’ll always come back to me. No one knows how to please him like I do. You’re just a child, did you really think you could handle a man like Xander?”

She throws her head back and laughs and I feel a small sting at her words. I’m an inexperienced in his world, but that won’t stop me from claiming what’s mine.

“This ‘child’ is a grown woman and your Luna, you will respect me or you will face the consequences. Do you understand me?”

Without even knowing it, I had used my Luna tone which caused Francesca to shrink back a bit. She scowled at me one more time before she spun around and stormed off, mumbling under her breath.

“Nice job handling the bitch!” Kimmy said approvingly.

“Thanks, but what the hell is her problem?”

“Besides being a bitch? Well, her and Xander hooked up once and she became obsessed with him. You can get the details from him if you want but she’s been following him like a lost puppy for the past three years. Once he decided that he was going to find his mate, Fran stopped existing in Xander’s world. She just can’t seem to accept it I guess.”

Kimmy shrugged the thought off, but I was having a tougher time.

Hearing that my mate had slept with someone before me had hurt, but knowing that he stopped when he began his search for me made things a little better.

I needed to see Xander and get all of our skeletons out in the open so we could have a solid foundation of trust.

Ugh! This was like the Alexi and Victoria situation all over again. Some ridiculous power hungry woman hanging all over a man who doesn't want her. It was sad really, and more than a little frustrating. But this time I won't be bullied and I won't back down.

It was time for me to go find my man.

I check the clock and see that I have time to quickly change before heading down to the bonfire.

I run up to my room and into my closet where I quickly grab a pair of blue skinny jeans and a gray long sleeved T-shirt.

I really wanted to dress up a bit since I'm meeting the pack, but figured that a ball gown at a bonfire wouldn't be the best idea.

After getting dressed, I pulled my hair up into my signature messy bun atop my head (long ponytail around a fire? Also a terrible idea), and pulled on a simple pair of hiking boots.

"This will have to do." I said while looking myself over in the mirror.

When I joined Kimmy downstairs I saw that she was similarly dressed which put my mind at ease.

"Incorporating the pack colors into your outfit? Nice choice Alaia. You really are meant to be our Luna huh?"

I look down and that's when I realize.

"Blue and grey. I didn't even realize I was doing it honestly. The clothes just seemed to fit the occasion."

"Xander would be so proud." Kimmy adds, wiping away a fake tear.

She then takes my hand and we head out the door and begin walking to the clearing she was telling me about.

As we walk, she fills me in on her time in school so far and how she can't wait to finally graduate.

“I’ll be a Junior this year, so at least I’ll be an upperclassman. But why does it have to be so boring? And why does my Homeroom teacher always smell like stale cheese??”

I laugh aloud at that.

“I can’t answer that for you Kim, but you’re at the end so just buckle down a little longer. You’ll be happy that you put in the effort when it’s all over.”

She smiles before pointing up ahead.

“The fire will be up through those trees. You’ll probably find Xander close to the center, helping with the logs. I’m going to go find some snacks and I’ll catch up with you.”

I nod then walk in the direction Kimmy told me. As soon as I enter the clearing I see him.

Xander is standing by the enormous fire and that skank has her arms wrapped around his waist.

She looks over and smirks at me before she gets up on her tiptoes and whispers something in his ear.

“Kill her! How dare she touch our mate. Kill the bitch now, or I will!” Amethyst fumes.

It feels like the air is sucked from my lungs and I can’t seem to move.

Xander then looks over and when I lock eyes with him I immediately turn and walk away.

They will not see me break, and they do not deserve my tears.

Unknown POV

I’m almost there, I just know it. I’ve never been a fan of moving in the shadows but it will just be a little bit longer until I will finally claim what is mine.

Watching Alaia walk away from the bonfire I was struck with inspiration. I know what I have to do now, I’ll just need a little help.

Surely, the Blue Moon pack hold no real loyalties to her yet, she will be like a lamb to the slaughter. And there I’ll be, a savior ready to pick up the pieces.

"Hold on my love, I'm coming for you..."

TWENTY-TWO | PUPS OF MY OWN

## Chapter 22 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

FUCK!

“FRANCESCA!”

Her name ripped through me with such force it almost knocked her off her feet.

My eyes were blazing with fury, my mate was hurting, and this bitch had a part in it.

“If you ever lay a finger on me again, you will be banished from the Blue Moon pack. And if you ever even think of pulling a stunt like that again, you will pray for death as it will be much gentler than what I will do to you. Do I make myself clear?”

I could see in her eyes that she wanted to fight me, but she couldn't disobey a command from her Alpha.

She bowed her head and said, “Yes, Alpha.”

“Now, get the fuck out of my sight before I have you thrown out.”

She spun around in her ridiculous outfit and ran out of the clearing.

I took a moment to calm myself before I turned and walked in the direction Alaia had taken.

I could smell her sweet caramel scent, and it brought me right to her.

She was sitting on a log overlooking a small pond.

I watched as she tossed small pebbles into the water and waited for the ripple to die down before tossing another in after it.

I silently sat beside her, unsure of what to say.

“I met Francesca back at the house; I don't think we'll be having any slumber parties anytime soon.”



“I’m so sorry, Little One. I didn’t even think about her when I brought you home. I haven’t shown her the slightest bit of interest in over three years; I promise you this.”

“How many?”

“How many what, baby?”

“How many ‘Francesca’s’ will I have to have compete with? How many more women will I have to hear tell me that I’m not enough for you? That I’ll never be able to satisfy you?”

I could hear the pain in her words. Alaiia was strong, but the thought of not being good enough was tearing her apart.

“I promised myself when I found you that I would never keep anything from you, no matter if it would hurt you or not. Francesca was a one-time mistake. She showed up when I was frustrated with my search for my mate; I couldn’t handle not being able to find you. I was weak, and I let my urges cloud my better judgment.”

We sat in silence for a few more minutes, just watching the ripples on the pond before she finally spoke.

“I’d never had a boyfriend growing up. My first ‘relationship’ ended two minutes after it started with me being rejected. I’m scared Xander, I’m afraid that I’m unlovable and I’m destined to be alone.”

I gently cupped Alaiia’s face and turned her, so we were looking into each other’s eyes.

“You’re the most lovable person I’ve ever met, baby. I can’t believe I was lucky enough to be your mate. And if you’re going to be alone, we’ll just have to be alone together. I can’t make promises for anyone else, but what I can do is promise that I will do everything in my power to ensure this will never happen again. You are more than enough for me; I will never want anything or anyone else. Alaiia, you’re my beginning and my end, please trust in that and trust in us.”

When she suddenly stood to her feet, I held my breath, terrified that she may have been too hurt to see what we had the potential to become.

“Alpha, I believe our pack is waiting for us to join them at the bonfire.”

She reached down, took my hand, and once I was standing, she wrapped her arms around my waist, and rested her head on my chest.

“Xander, you reek of ‘skank.’ I’m going to need you to shower as soon as this is all over. Got it?”

I roared with laughter before scooping her up in a hug.

I captured her juicy lips in a quick kiss before I said, “Yes, ma’am. I’ll take care of that ASAP.”

She flashed me that million-dollar smile of hers; then, we made our way back to the clearing and the pack.

“You called them ‘our pack’ back there. Does that mean what I hope it means?” I asked.

“Xander, you are mine, and I am yours. That makes me their Luna. Although it’s not official yet, this pack is just as much mine as it is yours. So, let’s go and celebrate with them.”

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Alaia POV

When Xander told me that I was his beginning and his end, everything finally clicked for me.

He was speaking the words of my heart. That was precisely how I felt about him.

I wouldn’t let anyone deter me from my destiny, and being Luna of the Blue Moon pack was my destiny.

As soon as we stepped into the clearing, I saw that the entire pack had gathered. There had to be over five-hundred wolves here, all looking at Xander and me.

I felt a surge of power flow through me as I took another step forward, bringing me to stand right in front of them.

“Good Evening, Blue Moon pack. My name is Alaia Miller, daughter of Alpha Jonathan Miller of the Opal Moon pack. I am beyond honored to be here with you all tonight.”

I could see smiles on some of their faces, looks of confusion on some, and looks of excitement on others.

Xander then stepped up beside me and announced. “I present to you, my mate, and your Luna. Let’s all welcome her home!”

Howls erupted from the pack, filling the night sky. This was now my pack, and I would risk my life to keep them safe. It was what I was born to do.

A group of six walked up to us, and the one whom I assumed was the leader got down on one knee before he spoke.

“Luna. My name is Henry, and I, along with my companions, you see here before you were given the honor of escorting you home today. As our Luna, you are the most important member of this pack, even more so than the Alpha. Without you, our Alpha cannot function, he cannot lead, and therefore he cannot exist. This pack is nothing without you to lead us. I vow my life to

you here tonight. I always promise to put your safety and wellbeing above my own. I vow to protect you until my last breath and beyond. On my honor.”

The other five then kneeled, and in unison, said, “On my honor.”

Before I could absorb what was happening, the entire pack had taken a knee.

“On my honor,” rang through the night.

Xander pulled me into a hug and whispered, “I guess this means that you are theirs as well.”

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The hours passed by in a blur of new and happy faces and conversation.

They were such a kind and welcoming group of people, and I was truly honored to have been chosen to lead them.

I was sitting on a log, watching the flames flick up into the air when an adorable little girl ran over to me. She had chubby cheeks, huge blue eyes, and curly golden hair.

“Hi Luna, this is for you,” she said before passing me a tiny yellow dandelion.

“Thank you; it’s so beautiful. What’s your name cutie?”

“Sophie.”

“What a pretty name. How old are you, Sophie?”

“I’m this many,” she said, showing me four tiny fingers.

“Ohh, you’re such a big girl. Where’s your mommy?”

“Umm, I ran away from mommy. She wanted me to go night-night, but I wanted to give you your present.”

My lips formed an “O” in understanding before I stood and said, “I appreciate your gift so much, Sophie. But I’ve got to get you back to your mommy, okay? She’s probably worried looking for you.”

“Yes, Luna,” Sophie said, looking down at her feet.

I reached down to take her hand and asked, “What’s your mommy’s name? Can you show me where she was?”

“Mommy’s name is Cassandra, but people like to call her Cassie. Come on; I’ll take to you her!”

We walked around for a little bit before I saw a frantic looking blonde-haired woman sprint past us.

“Cassie?” I asked, causing her to stop in her tracks.

When she turned and saw Sophie, she grabbed her chest in relief. "Thank the Goddess I found you!"

She then noticed me holding Sophie's hand and quickly walked over.

When she stood before us, she bowed her head and said, “Luna, I sincerely apologize for Sophie interrupting your evening. I’ll make sure this never happens again.”

“Cassie, it’s alright, really. Little Ms. Sophie here just wanted to bring me this beautiful flower. I’m happy that I was able to get her back to you before you had a heart attack, though,” I said with a laugh, making her relax a bit more.

“Thank you again, Luna. I almost lost it when I noticed that she was gone, she's never done something like this before.”

Cassie then leaned down to her daughter and looked her in the eyes.

“Sophie, tell the Luna goodnight. It’s time for bed.”

“Goodnight Luna, would you like to play with me tomorrow?”

“Sophie, the Luna is busy, baby. She won’t have time to play.”

When Sophie frowned that adorable face little face of hers, I kneeled and said, “I’d love to play with you tomorrow, sweetie, as long as it’s okay with your mommy.”

Sophie turned and put on her cutest pout possible before she said, “Please, mommy? Luna is so nice!”

Cassie finally let out a deep sigh and said, “Fine, it’s okay with me.”

I stood up and smiled at her. “Could you guys stop by the packhouse around 1:30 tomorrow? I’ll make sure I have plenty of fun activities for us to do.”

“Sure, we’ll see you tomorrow. Good night, Luna.”

“Good night Cassie, and please call me Alaia.”

I watched the two of them walk away before I felt a pair of strong arms wrap around my waist.

“You were amazing with her,” Xander said to me.

“I love kids, and Sophie is adorable. I can’t wait to have pups of my own.”

“Really? Well, you know, I’m more than happy to help you out with that.”

Before I could respond, Xander had tossed me over his shoulder and wrapped one arm over the back of my thighs, holding me in place. From my upside-down vantage point, I could see that he was heading towards the packhouse.

“Xander! Put me down; I can walk, you know!”

I felt a sharp slap on my ass, which made me squeal out loud.

“If you keep wiggling this delicious little ass in my face, I’ll put my seed in you right here and right now. Now, let’s go home. We’ve got some pups to make.”

TWENTY-THREE | PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

## Chapter 23 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

After I had stopped trying to fight my way off Xander’s shoulder, he smoothly slipped me down into a bridal carry.

“This is much better, but I can still walk on my own, you know.”

“You won’t be saying that in the morning. You’ll need to save your energy, baby. Because I’m about to worship every inch of this body of yours, then I’m going to fuck you until you scream my name to the heavens. Are you ready, Little One?”

I swallowed hard as I stared up into his face. I couldn’t believe this was finally happening. I began to nod my head before I remembered the rules.

I cleared my throat and said, “Yes, Daddy. I’m ready.”

“Good, then let’s go.”

He carried me into the house and up to our bedroom. When he closed the door behind us, he placed me on my feet before addressing me.

“I want all of your clothes off except for your panties. Remove the bun from your hair and place it into a long ponytail. I’m going to leave the room for a few minutes, and when I get back, you’ll be on your knees here in the middle of the floor, sitting back on your feet. Your hands will be behind your back, and your eyes will be cast down, awaiting my command. Understood?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

He turned and left the room, and I quickly stripped down to my panties like I was told and placed my clothes in the hamper.

I got on my knees to await his return when I remembered his instructions about my hair. I yanked my bun out; I’m sure I lost a few strands of hair in the process and pulled it back into a ponytail.

Just as I had placed my hands behind my back, I heard the door open and shut.

Because I was looking down, I wasn’t able to see him enter, but as his delicious scent took over my senses, I knew it couldn’t be anyone other than my mate.

“You’re such a good girl, Little One. You did everything Daddy asked of you perfectly. And you’ll be rewarded with a treat. Would you like that?”

“Yes, Sir,” I answered, still looking down at the floor.

I could feel my core starting to weep. I didn’t know what my reward would be, but I would take anything Xander wanted to give me.

He stepped into my view, and I saw that he was barefoot and wearing a pair of loose-fitting gray sweatpants.

“Look at me, baby.”

I did as told and slowly raised my head. As my eyes made their way to the bulge in his pants, I instinctively licked my lips.

The outline of his member left little to the imagination, and I knew that I wanted to get it in my hands, in my mouth, and in between my thighs.

“Do you see something you like, Little One?”

“Yes, Daddy,” I whispered.

“Then please, help yourself.”

I brought my shaky hands up and hooked my fingers into his waistband. I let out a long breath before I began to tug downwards slowly.

When his pants were finally at his ankles, I looked up and was speechless.

His dick was perfect, mouthwateringly so. It was at least ten inches long and wasn't even at full attention yet.

I began to reach out to touch it then pulled my hands back.

I looked up into Xander's eyes before I asked, "May I touch it, Daddy?"

"It belongs to you, Little One. All of me belongs to you. Do as you please, baby."

I reached up and tried to wrap a hand around his thick shaft, causing Xander to draw in a sharp breath.

One hand was too small to go all the way around, so I brought the other up and began to twist and pull slowly.

Xander became impossibly hard in my hands, and I saw a small bead of precum ooze out of the tip.

I had to taste him.

I stuck my tongue out and flicked up along his slit. Xander hissed in pleasure.

His reaction encouraged me, and I leaned forward and took him into my mouth.

He was so warm and smooth as I wrapped my lips tightly around him.

I wanted more.

I opened my mouth wider and took him further, touching the back of my throat, making my eyes water.

I pulled back, took a deep breath, and pulled him back in, this time taking him all the way down.

"Fuck, Little One. I love this mouth of yours."

I increased my speed, causing Xander to grab ahold of my ponytail and guide my head backward and forwards.

He was fucking my throat, and I couldn't get enough.

Tears were streaming down my cheeks and mixing with the saliva that was running from my mouth.

I was saddened when Xander pulled my head back, making the head of his dick leave my mouth with a loud wet “pop.”

I was mesmerized by the way it glistened in the light, entirely coated in my spit.

“Please give it back, Daddy,” I begged, looking up and into his eyes.

“I’d love nothing more than to fuck that dirty little mouth of yours until I cum down your throat, but I’ve got something better planned for you tonight. Stand up.”

Once I was on my feet again, Xander quickly leaned down and grabbed the back of my thighs, causing me to jump up and wrap my legs around his waist.

He studied my face, then whispered, “So perfect, so beautiful.”

I pulled his face to mine and crashed my lips into his. I kissed this man as if my life depended upon it, and in a way it did.

Xander had become my life, the reason my heart beat. I was nothing without him, and my kiss showed it.

He carried me to the bed and gently let me down.

He then stood up and let his eyes wander all over my body.

He lightly ran his fingers from my temple, down to my neck, to my large aching breasts, leaving a trail of goosebumps in their wake.

Xander’s eyes darkened when he cupped one breast in each hand and began to kneed and massage them gently.

My nipples became rock hard, protruding upwards and begging for his attention.

He graciously obliged when he leaned down over me and took my left nipple into his mouth and began to suckle lightly.

With his right hand, he moved to pinch, pull, and roll my other nipple between his thumb and forefinger.

My backed arched off the bed from the pleasure, attempting to push myself further into his greedy mouth.

“Xander...” I panted, unable to form any other words or full sentences.

He took my encouragement and bit down on my nipple while at the same time flicking his tongue and tugging.



The action caused a bolt of pleasure to shoot directly to my honey pot, eliciting a toe-curling orgasm from its depths.

Xander continued to work his magic while I wriggled and writhed underneath him.

When I finally came down from my high, Xander placed his head in the crook of my neck and grazed my marking spot with his canines, making me gush more of my sweet honey between my thighs.

“Little One, you smell exquisite. I think it’s time for Daddy to taste you.”

He reached down and hooked his fingers in the crotch of my panties before ripping them off in one smooth move.

He then trailed kisses from my neck, over my mounds, and down to my torso.

He licked, sucked, and bit his way around my quivering belly before he rested himself between my legs.

I heard him inhale deeply before he lowered his head and flicked out his tongue for the first taste.

The contact caused a mini-gasm to ripple through me. I bit down on my lip, trying to hold in my moans.

“Don’t you dare Little One. Your sounds are mine; give them to me!”

Xander brought two fingers up and spread my lower lips. He then ran his tongue from my entrance up to my engorged bud.

“Mmm, shit, Daddy. That’s so good...”

He began to alternate between twirling his tongue around and sucking directly on my clit, making me come undone.

I felt when two fingers were slipped inside me and curled up to tickle my G-spot.

My brain had become mush. The sounds coming from my mouth were reminiscent to...nothing! I don’t think any living thing in the history of the world had ever made the sounds I was making.

“Cum for Daddy, baby. Just let go.”

The damn broke, and I gushed all over Xander’s beautiful face.

He continued to lick and lap between my soaked thighs, trying to drink all of me down.

My orgasm continued relentlessly; white spots started to cloud my vision.

Xander flicked my bud one more time before he lifted his head and crawled up to rest between my legs, holding himself up on his elbows.

“I was right, you are by far my favorite food, and I intend to eat you every single night. And day.”

Hearing him say this made my face instantly heat up.

He leaned down and kissed my marking spot before asking, “Are you ready for this baby?”

I nodded my head.

“Yes, sir.”

“This will hurt a bit, Little One. Just keep your eyes on me, okay?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

I held my breath as he gently pressed himself at my entrance.

“You need to breathe, baby.”

I took a deep breath and nodded my head.

Xander then pushed inside of me, smoothly breaking through my barrier.

My eyes snapped shut at the pain.

“Look at me, Little One. Stay here with me.”

I opened my eyes and stared deep into Xander’s crystal blue ones.

I felt a few tears run down my face, which Xander gently kissed away.

He remained still inside of me for a few more moments waiting for me to adjust to his size.

Once the pain had subsided, I gave a small nod, permitting him to start to move again.

I was able to stretch to accommodate Xander’s thickness comfortably, and soon, the pain was replaced with more pleasure than I’ve ever experienced.

I dug my nails in and raked them across his back, pulling a growl from his chest.

Moans began to again spill from my mouth, giving Xander all the encouragement he needed. He grabbed ahold to my hips, lifted me from the bed a bit, and began pumping his cock harder and faster. I reached down and started rubbing my swollen clit.

Our moans and cries of pleasure filled the room. I could feel my sweet juices running down my thighs and pooling on the bed beneath me. I continued to furiously rub my clit and reached up to squeeze my left breast while he fucked me harder and harder, watching me writhe beneath him.

I felt myself beginning to clench Xander tighter, attempting to milk him for all he had.

If it was even possible, he began to fuck me harder than before, then leaned down to bury his teeth into my marking spot.

The orgasm hit me with the force of an atomic bomb. Bursts of light flashed behind my eyes and a delicious mixture of pleasure and pain coursed through my veins.

Xander also reached his climax and pumped stream after stream of his thick fluid inside me, completely covering my inner walls.

As I began to come down, Xander ran his tongue over my mark, sealing it and cleaning up the blood.

My body was completely limp.

“How are you feeling, baby?”

“Mmm, amazing. I feel like I could sleep for days,” I said, as my eyes began to shut slowly.

Xander gently started to grind his hips against mine, as he began to harden and grow inside me.

I gasped when I felt it, surprised that he was ready to go again so soon.

“That was just round one. Wrap your legs around my waist and hold on tight, baby. The night is still young, and I’m just getting started.”

Xander then proceeded to make good on his promise. He made me scream his name so many times I lost count, along with my voice.

By the time he finally let me rest, the sun was coming up over the horizon ushering in a new day.

Xander pulled my back against his chest and wrapped his firm arms around me.

“If I haven’t put my pup in you yet, I’d be surprised. But if that is the case, there’s always tonight to try again.”

He kissed the back of my head, and I felt myself slip into dreamland.

# Chapter 24 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

As I felt Alaia's body drift off to sleep, I couldn't help but feel an overwhelming amount of pride.

She handled herself beautifully last night, taking everything I gave her without a single complaint and never straying from the rules.

I must say I was surprised when she told me she wanted pups. I didn't have any problem with children but never pictured any of my own.

Not until she made it a possibility. The idea of watching her perfectly flat belly swell with life that I had put there made my cock hard all over again.

I'd give her all the babies she wanted, all the pups she could stand.

She showed how perfect she was in every way, and I was in awe of her. I would do anything for her.

I leaned down and buried my nose in her hair and breathed deep.

She still smelled of the sweetest caramel, but now she held my scent as well. Everyone would know that she was mine.

I decided I'd let her rest for a few hours before I woke her up to start her day.

Even though I was still holding myself back last night, I went further than I had initially intended.

I never dreamed that Alaia would last with me taking her over and over until the sun came up, and the fact that she did just fueled my lust.

It was a vicious cycle that I just couldn't break.

I would go easier on her moving forward, at least until she was fully ready. Then she would experience the beast I could truly become.

But for now, she needed to rest and recharge. The pack needed their Luna and wouldn't take no for an answer.

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Alaia POV

I woke to the feeling of being carried through the air and slowly opened my eyes to see I was cradled in Xander's arms.

"Good morning, beautiful. How did you sleep?" he asked while smiling down at me.

"Umm, I don't believe you can call that 'sleep' Xander."

"Let me rephrase then: How was your nap that followed the first of many nights where you get fucked into oblivion?"

My mouth dropped open, and I couldn't speak.

Xander threw his head back and laughed before kissing my face.

"You're so adorable; I don't know how you do it."

It was then that I noticed that Xander was carrying me into the bathroom and towards the huge tub.

It was filled with thick bubbles, and the steam that rose from them smelled of honey and lavender.

Once we were at the edge, Xander placed me on my feet before stepping inside and sinking down.

He then reached out his hand to help me in as well.

The heat of the water penetrated my sore muscles, and I instantly relaxed against Xander's hard chest.

As I laid there, Xander grabbed a giant sponge, and after adding a generous amount of the same lavender and honey-scented bath gel, he began to rub it all over my aching body.

He was so gentle, almost as if he were afraid I would break.

Xander leaned me forward a bit and lovingly washed circles on my back. He then brought the sponge to my front, applying a thick lather to my breasts and stomach.

Without realizing, my nipples had become rock hard, and my lotus flower was again dripping its nectar.

“Mmm, Little One, are you enjoying your bath? You smell better than all of the products here. The scent of your arousal will be my undoing.”

Xander then reached down between my legs and slowly slipped two fingers inside.

My back arched against his chest, and I grabbed the sides of the tub to steady myself.

I was still sore from last night, and this morning, but there was nothing that I wanted more than him inside me.

I could feel his cock starting to harden and poke me in the back as his fingers continued to tease me at a painfully slow pace.

I grabbed on his wrist in an attempt to make him increase his tempo but was unsuccessful.

“Both hands on the edge of the tub, Little One.”

I did as I was told. “Yes, Sir.”

Xander then grabbed hold of both my hips and gently lifted me off his lap.

I felt his engorged tip rest against my entrance as he began to slowly lower me down until I had taken all of him in.

Xander’s cock was pressing firmly against my cervix, but the pain it caused just added to my pleasure.

“Hold on, okay, baby?”

“Okay, Daddy.”

With that, Xander began lifting me up and down his shaft, using me as his own personal fuck toy.

He was moving slowly, so excruciatingly slow, and I didn’t know if I could handle it.

“Gentle now, baby, you’ve had a very long night. Just relax and let me take care of you.”

My head fell back and rolled back and forth over his shoulder as I allowed myself to continue to be impaled over and over.

“Mmm Xander...please...just a little faster...please, Daddy.”

Thankfully he took pity on me and began to thrust upwards a little faster and harder while continuing to control my movements through the tight grip on my hips.

Soon it appeared that of the last bit of control he had snapped as Xander's hips picked up speed, and he began to piston his dick inside me, knocking directly upon the entrance to my womb.

“Are you ready, Little One?”

“I'm ready, so, so ready, Daddy.”

“Cum for me now, baby. I want you to clench and squirt all over this dick,” he said right into my ear.

Like the good submissive I was, I did exactly as he asked. My walls tightened into a vice grip around Xander, and the orgasm ripped through me, stealing my breath along the way.

My fingertips had turned white from the grip I had on the edge of the tub, and I could taste that I had drawn blood when I bit down on my bottom lip.

“Such a good fucking girl you are for Daddy. So fucking perfect,” Xander growled as he pumped his seed deep inside my core.

His orgasm seemed to go on forever, filling me to the brim.

When it was all over, he slowly lifted me, causing him to slide from my soaked slit.

We both rested against the tub for a few moments before Xander grabbed the sponge and began to lather it up once more.

“Now, let's get you cleaned up, and out of this tub, Little One or I may just have to take you all over again.”

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After the bath, Xander and I finally got dressed and began our walk downstairs.

As soon as I reached the bottom step, my stomach rumbled loudly.

“Have I worn you out, Little One? Let's get some food in that belly of yours.”

Rounding the corner to the kitchen, I was hit with a mouthwatering smell. Bacon, sausage, and strawberries and cream pancakes?

I rushed in to see that I was right; there were stacks upon stacks of my favorite pancakes sitting on the kitchen island.

“But...how?” I asked to no one in particular.

“I asked my lead omega, Mrs. Dyson, to reach out to your old pack and speak to Mrs. Wilson to get a few of your favorite recipes. Mrs. Wilson was more than happy to help and even offered to visit if a live demonstration was needed.”

“This is amazing!”

“Have a seat, Little One. Your breakfast will be served shortly.”

Once I settled in beside Xander, a young omega around my age walked up, placing our plates before us.

“Enjoy your breakfast, Alpha, Luna.”

Before she had walked away, I began to devour the food. The pancakes melted in my mouth, causing me to moan with pleasure.

Xander looked over with a smile as he took his first bite of pancake.

He raised an eyebrow before stating, “These really are delicious. Not as delicious as you though.”

“You won’t distract me from my mission, Xander. Not today,” I said before I turned slightly away from him and took a massive bite of bacon.

As I continued to crunch my bacon loudly, I looked up and saw Matt and Kade walk in.

“Good Morning Xander, Alaia,” Matt greeted us with a smile.

“Good Morning Matt,” I replied before going back to my plate.

Wait! Matt? I didn’t get all flustered when I spoke to him. That gorgeous smile of his didn’t make my belly do those ridiculous flips. Xander was right!

I jumped to my feet. “Oh, my goodness! Hi, Matt!!” I squeaked with joy.

I ran over and wrapped him in a huge hug, as big as I could manage with my short arms.

I then looked up at his perfect and confused face and said, “You’re just another pretty face now, I can’t tell you how happy I am!”

Both him and Xander laughed out loud when hearing that.

“I’m glad to hear it, and I’m happy as well, Luna.”



“Alaia. We’re going to be best friends Matt, just wait and see.”

“I look forward to it, Alaia,” he said as he returned the hug.

“What, so I’m invisible now? Is no one happy to see me? Damn it Matt, you really are a curse!” Kade argued.

“Oh shut it, Kade, we see you. And you can be my friend too if you feel so left out,” I said before walking back to my seat and finishing my food.

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The guys sat down to join us, and I laughed until I cried listening to Kade and Matt tell me stories about the three of them growing up.

“I don’t know how Uncle Xavier dealt with the three of us. He constantly had to get us out of trouble. I wasn’t until he threatened to take the Alpha title away from Xander that we all finally straightened up,” Matt said with a smile.

I couldn’t imagine him as a wild teenager, but from the stories, he was just as bad as the other two, if not worst.

“Wow, who knew hormonal teenaged boys were such idiots?” I asked.

“Trust me, Sweetheart. Xavier and I knew all too well,” Katherine said as she entered the kitchen.

“Good Morning Katherine, how are you today?”

“I’m good, Dear, but how are you? You look exhausted. Xander! What have you done to this poor girl?”

“Nothing she didn’t ask me to do, Mom,” Xander replied, making me blush scarlet.

Kade, Matt, and Xander roared with laughter while Katherine narrowed her eyes at her son.

“You are absolutely your father’s child! Alaia, sweetie? If you’ve finished with your breakfast, I’d like to take some time to discuss your Luna ceremony with you. Maybe we could chat up in your office?”

“Oh, I had completely forgotten I had an office. Sure Katherine, just give me fifteen minutes to finish up, and I’ll meet you there.”

I grabbed myself a cup of coffee in an insulated mug before I bid the guys goodbye and headed up to the 4th floor.

When I opened the door to my office, I was again surprised by how well decorated it was.

Instead of the usual blue and grey, the majority of the house held, the office was decorated with my favorite color teal with silver accents.

“Wow, this is awesome,” I said as I stepped further inside.

I saw that I had a small minibar stocked with snacks and beverages, a flat-screen tv mounted to the wall over a small seating area and an adjoining bathroom.

The desk was sleek and modern. It was gray-toned frosted glass with silver edges.

“I do hope you like everything, Alaia. All Xander told me was that you liked the color teal and not to forget your snacks. I had to take it from there,” Katherine told me when she entered the room.

“You did all this?”

“I did. I love my son dearly, but I wouldn’t have trusted him with this space. Only a former Luna can know what a future Luna will need to lead.”

“Thank you, Katherine. It’s perfect.”

“Good, now let’s sit, and we can see what your vision for your Luna ceremony is.”

Katherine began to go over different ideas and themes; each one was even more elaborate than the last. They would require tons of food, flowers, music, lights, everything.

“It’s like we’re putting on a wedding,” I mused.

“It’s extremely similar. This ceremony not only ties you to Xander but the entire pack for all of eternity. You’ll form a bond with every member of this pack that will never be broken. It’s a celebration of a marriage between not two, but many souls.”

“Well, when you put it like that...”

We spent a little over two hours finalizing and refining the details. Katherine had already begun making calls getting everything in place, making my job ridiculously easy.

“So, a week from Saturday, you will officially become our newest Luna. I can’t wait!”

I glanced at the time and saw that it was already 12:30. That’s when I remembered my play date with Sophie and Cassie.

“Oh, I’ve got to go, Katherine. I’ve got a mother and her pup coming over this afternoon at 1:30. I promised I’d have some fun activities planned for us.”

“Check in the common room Sweetie; I’m sure they’ll have some finger paints, paper, board games, and the likes in the cabinets that will work for you.”

“That’s perfect, thank you. And thank you again for helping me with the ceremony. I sincerely appreciate all you’ve done for me since I’ve arrived.”

“It’s been my pleasure. Off you go, we can’t have you late for such an important meeting,” she told me with a smile.

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At 1:30 on the dot, Sophie ran into the common room, wearing a massive smile on her chubby little face.

“Hi Luna, are you ready to play with me?” she asked.

“I sure am, Sophie.”

I reached down to give her a quick hug before I took her hand and led her to a small table I had set up in the corner.

I looked up to see Xander and Cassie enter the room from different directions; both focused on Sophie and me.

“Oh, Alpha Xander. My name is Cassie Stewart. Thank you for allowing Sophie and me into your home today. She was so excited when she met the Luna last night.”

“You’re very welcome Cassie, besides our Luna just has that effect on people. I’ll have to get used to sharing her more often.”

Sophie looked up from the table of goodies before her and shyly glanced over at Xander.

She gently tugged my sleeve, asking me to lean down closer to her when she whispered, “He’s so big. Is he nice?”

I smiled down at her worried little face and said, “Yes, he’s very nice. I promise. Go and say hi, you’ll see.”

She studied my face for a moment, looking for any signs of dishonesty. When she didn’t find any, she slid down from her seat and walked over to Xander.

“Alpha Xander?”

Xander looked down and smiled before he said: “Yes, Cutie?”

“My name is Sophie, and I really like your Luna. Can I keep her?”

We all laughed, except for little Sophie. She just didn't understand why we weren't taking her request seriously.

"Well, Sophie, I like her too. So how about you and your mom come over to visit with my Luna whenever you want? Would that be okay?"

"I wanted to take her home with me, but I guess I can just come over here to see her. You guys have a pool!"

Satisfied with her negotiation skills, Sophie turned away and ran back to sit at the table beside me again.

"Well, ladies, I've got some work to do. You all enjoy your afternoon," Xander said before walking out.

Once Cassie joined us at the table, Sophie said, "You were right, Luna, he is nice. I think I like him too!"

"I'm glad to hear that."

The three of us made finger paint pictures, macaroni necklaces, and colorful masks out of construction paper, feathers, and glitter. We then went outside and collected flowers from the garden, which I used to make us all flower crowns.

By the time 4:00 rolled around, Sophie was passed out in her mother's arms.

"Thank you so much for today, Alaia. Sophie and I had the best time."

"So did I. And please, feel free to come by anytime. I loved spending time with you two today. Next time bring your bathing suits, and we can all get in the pool."

"Sure! Sophie would love that. I'll see you around Alaia."

As soon as they left, my body became heavy with fatigue. My lack of sleep last night mixed with chasing a four-year-old around for the last few hours struck me.

Dinner wouldn't be served until 6:00, so I took the opportunity to head up for a quick nap.

Once I reached our floor, I walked up to Xander's office and knocked on the door. I then heard his smooth voice on the other side, telling me to come in.

I peeked my head in; "Am I interrupting?" I asked.

"Never, baby. Did you need something?"

“No, Cassie and Sophie just left, so I was going to lay down for a quick nap before dinner. I just wanted to let you know.”

“Sounds good. I’m just wrapping up here, so maybe I’ll join you soon.”

“Works for me. I’ll see you later.”

I then turned and headed straight for my bed.

As soon as I entered the room, I walked over, fell face-first into the blankets, and was out within minutes.

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Unknown POV

It was finally ready. All of my time sneaking around with these disgusting witches and warlocks had paid off.

I looked at the tiny vile of black liquid in my hand and smiled. Once ingested, it would shut a werewolf’s body down from the inside out, leaving them to suffer a slow a painful death.

I just had to slip it into their drink and wait. Soon enough, my love would be in my arms once more, and I’d soothe their aching heart.

I was almost there...

TWENTY-FIVE | WE HAVE TO GO BACK

## Chapter 25 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

I slowly began to get into a routine with my new pack, and before I knew it, it was the day of the full moon.

Blue Moon pack was planning a big dinner and would end the night with a pack run. The dinner wasn't something done at every full moon, but because it was my first with them, Xander wanted to make it unique.

I was taking a walk through the gardens around the house when my phone rang, pulling me from my thoughts.

I checked the screen and saw my favorite picture of Jordyn and me on the caller ID.

I didn't realize I had missed her so much until I answered the call and immediately screamed in the receiver.

“ALAIA? What's wrong, are you alright?? Aaron, get in here now! We've got to get to the Blue-”

“Jordyn, calm down, I'm fine. I was just so excited that you called. I've missed you guys so-”

“What. The. ACTUAL. FUCK ALAIA?! Why would you do that to me? My nerves are already bad enough with my fucking Luna ceremony tonight, and then you pull some shit like this? I'd kick your tiny ass if you were here right now!”

“I'm sorry, J, I didn't mean to scare you. How are you and Aaron? Are you guys ready for tonight?”

“Ugh, you bitch! I really hate you right now. Don't think I'll just forget about this. Anyway, I'm a nervous wreck, and I don't know what to do. I'm a fighter, not a Luna! I know I'm supposed to be Aaron's perfect compliment, but he's the friendly, approachable one. I just want to kick people's asses all day! I need you, Alaia; I need you here because I don't know if I can go through with this.”

I wished I could be with Jordyn and Aaron so badly right now. Two of the most important people to me were taking huge steps in their lives, but because of some crazed possessive ex, I couldn't be there.

But why was I letting Alexi control me? Why should I miss something so important to me, so important to them, to keep from stirring the pot of jealousy?

I wouldn't. I wasn't going to let myself be afraid; I wasn't going to let someone else dictate my life.

“Jordyn? You're stronger than you think. You can do this. You don't have to be anyone's idea of what a Luna should be. All you have to do is support your Alpha; everything else will fall into place. Be the kick-ass Luna you were born to be, and stand by my brother's side. Can you do that for me?”

“I can be a kick-ass Luna?” she asked while sniffing into the phone.

“Of course you can, the Moon Goddess herself demands it!”

“I still wish you were here with us, but I feel so much better after talking to you. I will give you a call tomorrow, okay? I’ve got to find your mom and make sure everything is ready for tonight. I love you, girl.”

“Love you too, Jordyn. Talk to you later.”

I sat in the garden for a short while longer watching the flowers, feeling the breeze, and just enjoying the sun on my face.

My wolf was getting more and more agitated. The whole situation seemed to weigh heavier on her than I thought it should. And I was torn, what was I supposed to do?

I knew how important tonight was for Aaron and Jordyn, but I also knew that my safety was a priority.

We have to go back, Alaia. We need to be there tonight.

Amethyst? Why is this so important? What about Alexi?

I can’t tell you that, Doll. What I can tell you is that I know without a doubt that we need to go back to Opal Moon tonight. This is written in our destiny.

I don’t know why, but I feel it too. And I trust you.

Talk to our mate; you can make him understand.

I quickly stood up, dusted myself off, and rushed up to Xander’s office.

He was sitting behind his desk working, but when he saw me, he immediately went into protection mode.

“Alaia? What’s wrong, baby? Did something happen?”

He quickly crossed the floor and grabbed onto my arms, looking me over for injuries.

“I-I have to go...I have to go home, Xander.”

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Xander POV

Go home? This was her home now. She was a week away from officially being named my Luna, and she wanted to go back?

“What do you mean, ‘Go home’? Your home is right here, Alaia. This is not an extended slumber party, and we are not just two people dating who occasionally sleepover at each other’s

place. You are my mate, and this packs Luna, so please explain to me why you now want to leave me; to leave us.”

I felt like my heart was breaking; what had happened that made her change her mind about us? If it was Francesca, I’d peel her skin from her bones without a second thought.

Alaia shook her head frantically before answering.

“No! That’s not what I meant; I’d never leave you, Xander. And I’d never leave our pack. I just need to go back to the Opal Moon pack for the Alpha ceremony tonight. Aaron and Jordyn need me, and I need to be there for them. I know that is my home now, and I love it here. I’m so sorry for my poor word choice earlier.”

I heaved a sigh of relief. Alaia didn’t want to leave me, but she wanted to put herself in danger; I was conflicted.

I wanted nothing more than to make her happy, but I also had to keep her safe.

“Alaia, you do understand the potential danger you’d face going back? You saw firsthand that Alexi was using dark magic. We don’t know what his plan is; we don’t even know how to find him.”

“Please, Xander. I know I’ll be safe with you by my side. I just really feel like I need to be there tonight. My wolf is telling me to go back, and I can’t ignore her. I won’t force this on you; if you feel that the danger outweighs the benefit, then I will try and let this go. But if you see any way for me to go back, just for a few hours, then please take me.”

I ran over strategies quickly in my head before I looked down at Alaia’s pleading eyes. She knew I couldn’t deny her anything.

“Henry and his team will escort us in their wolf forms. Kade will remain here to stand in our place at the dinner and pack run. Matt will accompany us to Opal Moon and remain by your side if, at any point, I can’t be. You cannot go off on your own, Alaia. You have to promise me that you’ll stay with Matt or myself the entire night, even if it’s just to go pee.”

She rolled her eyes at my last statement, but she was getting what she wanted, so she didn’t have much room to argue.

“It’s a deal. Thank you so much, Xander. When do we leave?”

“I’ll have the warriors here in fifteen. We’ll head out in thirty minutes. I need to call your father and let him know of our arrival as well.”

She stood on her tippy toes and kissed my cheek before spinning around and running to our room to get ready.



I had a feeling that tonight would be a night to remember in more ways than one.

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Twenty minutes after I ended my call with Alpha Jonathan, I stood outside the pack house with Kade, Matt, Henry, and the rest of the escort team finalizing the details of the trip.

Even though we were going to Alaia's old pack and not some unknown territory, tensions were still a bit high.

“Alpha, we will guard her with our lives,” Henry assured me before he and his team shifted.

Matt stepped closer and pulled Kade and me aside.

“Xander, have Alaia wear this bracelet tonight. It was given to me by one of the elders, and it’s said that the center stone holds powerful protection properties against dark magic. The stone will begin to glow if, at any point, the wearer is being targeted. If Alexi tries to get to Alaia through a spell or potion, it will not affect her. It’s very rare, the last of its kind, and has to be returned to the elders as soon as we return.”

“If it so rare, why would the elders trust you with it?” Kade asked.

“I guess this pretty face really is good for something, now isn’t it? Anyway,” Matt said, returning his attention to me, “the stone will protect her spiritually, and we will protect her physically.”

This bracelet was it. This stone was exactly what we needed to ensure Alaia’s total safety. I had no doubt that a frontal attack against us would be quickly subdued, but I had no power against dark magic, and that scared me. I could now relax, just a bit, knowing that we had our bases covered.

“No one besides the three of us will know of what this bracelet does. Matt, if at any time it starts to glow, remain passive and send me a mindlink. I’ll alert the escort team, and we can try and sift out anyone there who could be responsible. And thank you for this.”

“I’ve got to look out for my best friend, don’t I?”

“Ugh! I see you two have this all handled, so I’ll go back and do some real work. I’ll go and entertain OUR pack while you’re all off gallivanting with Opal Moon. Enjoy your party!” Kade said while mumbling and stomping up the porch stairs.

“You love to rile him up, don’t you?” I asked.

“I do. It keeps Kade humble,” Matt replied with a sly grin.

Alaia then bounced down the stairs, clearly happy about tonight.

“Someone looks excited,” I said. “Are you ready?”

“Yes, and thank you guys so much for doing this. I really appreciate it.”

“Anything for my best friend! I’ll meet you two in the car,” Matt said, getting a smile from Alaia.

He then hopped in the driver’s seat and started the engine.

I turned to her before she could follow behind him and took her hand.

“Baby, please be extra careful tonight, okay? I wouldn’t be able to function if anything were to happen to you.”

“I promise I’ll stay by you or Matt’s side the entire night. Everything will be okay. I’m meant to be there tonight; I just know it.”

As she spoke, I removed the bracelet from my pocket and gently slid it onto her wrist.

She looked down at it then back up at me.

“Xander, this is beautiful.”

“It is, and I want you to wear it tonight. Don’t take it off, okay?”

I didn’t tell her why, and she didn’t ask. She just nodded her head before climbing into the back seat of the truck and buckling in.

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The trip took a little over three hours. Once we arrived back on Opal Moon territory, we were immediately allowed to cross over the border, then escorted to the packhouse.

As we were making our way up the driveway, I looked over and saw Alaia’s eyes glazed over; she was mindlinking someone. But she hadn’t shifted yet, how was this possible?

Her eyes became clear again as she looked at me.

“It’s Aaron. As twins, we have been able to mindlink each other our entire lives. I can only link him, and he can only link me. He must have felt my presence when I crossed the border.”

“I guess that makes sense. Why didn’t you ever say anything?”

“Eh, it’s always been our own twin thing. Because we’ve done it our whole lives, it’s just normal for us now, and I guess no longer something that I find interesting enough to share.”

“Have you got any other cool superhero twin powers I should know about?”

“Ha! Not that I know of, but the night is young, and I may just surprise you,” she added with a wink.

Just then, we pulled up front and parked the truck.

Aaron and Jordyn rushed out the front door and had engulfed Alaia in a hug.

I hadn't realized she was out of the car, but there she was being crushed to death by her family.

“Why didn't you tell me you were coming when I called earlier?”

“I didn't know then. I spoke to Xander afterward, and we were able to quickly get everything in place.”

“Thank the Goddess you're here, Alaia! My wolf had been hounding me for days about it,” Aaron chimed in.

“Really? My wolf pushed me to come back tonight as well. I wonder what's got them so riled up.”

“I guess we'll find out soon enough,” he responded.

I then stepped up to Aaron and shook his hand.

“I'll be the first to congratulate you, Alpha Aaron. I look forward to us working together soon. This is my Gamma Matthew. He'll be looking out for Alaia's safety this evening alongside myself. There is also a second group of six of my warriors who will guard the perimeter. They will remain in their wolf forms.”

Aaron turned to Matt and shook his hand.

“Gamma, it's nice to meet you. Thank you for being here to keep my sister safe.”

“It's my pleasure, Alpha.”

The group began to head into the house with Matt and me guarding Alaia's sides.

I saw Matt tense up a bit from the corner of my eye and decided to link him to find out if there was an issue.

Matt, everything okay?

Yes. But I have a question.

What is it?

Back in the car, if I heard correctly, Alaia and Aaron, they are twins?

Yes, they are—the only children born to Alpha Jonathan and his Luna.

Is Alaia the youngest?

She is, by six minutes, if I remember correctly. Where are you going with this?

I think I know why their wolves were so insistent on them being together tonight.

Okay?

I believe Alaia may be an Amethyst wolf.

TWENTY-SIX | THE AMETHYST WOLF

## Chapter 26 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Xander POV

An Amethyst wolf? What was he talking about, and why had I never heard of this before? I needed to know everything he knew, but I had to get Alaia in a safe place first.

My prayers were answered when Jordyn spoke up.

“Alaia, come up and help me decide on what I’m wearing tonight. You can bring your stuff too, and we can get ready together. Bring your sexy guards along; they can just wait in the seating area of the dressing room.”

Perfect.

We made our way up to the dressing room, and Matt went in first to secure the area. Once clear, I escorted the ladies in and locked the door behind us.

Matt and I took our designated seats while Jordyn and Alaia began their search for the perfect dress.

It was time for him to fill me in.

Okay, Matt, can you explain to me what an Amethyst wolf is and why you think Alaia may be one?

Well, I'm not 100% sure, but I've heard stories before, and this all just seems to fit.

I'm listening.

Once every thousand years, a particular set of twins will be born to a mated pair, one male and one female. If the second born is female, she will be blessed with a power so great, that it will only be granted under certain conditions. To come into her powers, she must complete her first shift with her twin by her side. It must be done on the first full moon after their eighteenth birthday, and finally, the shift must take place on the land of their birth.

Well, that sounds exactly like our situation. And would explain why both Aaron and Alaia's wolves were so agitated with her not being here.

Exactly. The stories go on to say that the wolf could possess the power to heal, to protect, to see the future, the possibilities are endless. But what is known for sure is that dark forces will not affect her. She will be a rare beauty, with eyes a bright and vibrant purple.

Purple, like the stone in the bracelet from the elders?

Exactly. The stone and the wolf draw from the same power source. She will be just as rare as the stone, indeed the only one of her kind.

If she's an Amethyst wolf, why hasn't she ever said anything about it? Wouldn't she know something like this?

Not necessarily, as is the case with any great power, there will be some that will seek it out for evil. It's said that she wouldn't know of her abilities until she is ready to receive them. No one else would know of them either. Not until she shifts and reveals her true self.

So many thoughts were running through my head; it was hard to organize them all.

I had known Alaia was special, but I had never expected something of this magnitude.

Then I remembered something. A few days ago, I asked Alaia if she wanted to try and complete her first shift. I wanted to go on a run and have her along with me. She refused, stating that she didn't feel ready. And I was hurt. I was destroyed by the idea that she didn't want to share her wolf with me. If I had pushed her, I could have ruined her without even knowing it.

The idea made me sick to my stomach.

Are you alright, Xander?

Yeah, I'm just thinking. So, I guess we'll just have to wait and see what happens tonight, huh?

I guess so. You know it's uncommon for anyone other than the Alpha to complete their first shift at the Alpha ceremony, but if Alaia really is an Amethyst wolf, they will both be compelled to shift together.

And what about Aaron? Would he have any powers?

Being part of an Amethyst pair would make him slightly stronger than an average Alpha. His speed and all his senses would be heightened as well, but he wouldn't be nearly as powerful as her. If she has the power of healing, she could transfer it to him temporarily. But how she would do it, and under what circumstances, I have no idea.

Thanks, Matt. We will just have to wait and see how this all plays out.

It seemed that my prediction of this being a night to remember was coming true. Interesting.

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Aaron POV

As soon as I felt Alaia cross back into our territory, my wolf, Flint, began to howl with joy and run circles in my mind.

I had no reason why, but I knew that I needed her here with me tonight. It wasn't that I didn't have the support of my pack, my parents, and my mate, but I needed her. I needed my twin.

After she and Jordyn went up to get ready for the night, I went to my new office to think.

My father had cleared out his belongings a few days ago, allowing me more time to settle in.

I looked around, remembering all the times as a child Alaia, and I would come here and watch him work, and now it was my turn.

I heard a sharp rap on the door and sensing that it was my Dad, I walked over to let him in.

"Hi Son, how are you feeling? Are you ready for this?"

"Yes, Sir. I am. I was a nervous wreck, but now that Alaia is here, I'm excited and ready to go."

"You two have always been close; it would stand to reason that tonight would be no different. I've spoken with everyone, and we're all set downstairs. The elders have just arrived with the Alpha's Chalice; all we need now is you."

I took a deep breath and gave him a firm nod.

"Alright, I'm ready."

We made our way down the stairs in silence. I believe the importance of what we were about to do left no room for small talk.

Everything was set in the back yard. There was a small stage put up at one end of the yard that was covered in bright string lights.

There was a sea of faces as the pack had already assembled, but I was able to quickly spot Jordyn and Alaia holding hands off to the side.

I would have to shift before the elders would allow me to drink from the Alpha's Chalice.

Under the soft glow of the full moon, there was a spot of bare grass right at the tree line that seemed perfect.

I began to walk towards it with my father close behind.

The pack turned their attention to the spot, and soon all eyes were on me as I prepared myself to take this first step.

"Just do as I taught you, Aaron. Clear your mind and listen to your wolf. Allow him to come forth and take control. When the pain comes, do not fight it, embrace it. It's that pain that will set forth your transformation," he told me.

Jordyn and Alaia stepped to the front of the group, both sending me supportive smiles.

I took a deep breath, cleared my mind, and nothing. I couldn't find Flint.

So, I tried again.

I shook my limbs loose and rolled my neck.

When I closed my eyes, I focused on him, and after a few moments, I heard his voice.

We need her to do this with us.

We need who?

We need your sister. She has to take her first shift alongside us.

But why? I don't understand.

You will soon.

"Aaron, is everything alright?" I heard my father ask.

I opened my eyes and looked at him before responding.

“I’m not sure. I hear my wolf, but he says that I need Alaia.”

I heard murmurs through the crowd, which my father immediately silenced with a raise of his hand.

“Alaia, sweetheart? Will you step forward with us, please?”

She did as he asked, and soon the three of us were standing together with what felt like the eyes of the world watching.

The elders in attendance had also stepped forward; it seemed they were now more than a little interested in what was going to happen.

We didn’t have to utter a word to one another. Alaia just knew what she needed to do.

She took my hands in hers and closed her eyes.

I felt a surge of power flow through us and wondered if everyone’s first shift felt this way.

I again focused on Flint.

Just let go, Aaron and let me take control. Don’t worry about the pain; it will pass.

I felt my body begin to burn and itch. My bones began to elongate and dislocate, shifting into my wolf form.

The itching increased when thick gray fur began to sprout from my skin. My head felt like it was on fire as the bones of my skull shifted and rearranged.

I heard a loud “pop” followed by a sharp pain shooting down my spine that made me double over onto all fours.

There was a four-alarm blaze licking across my entire body like it had been doused in gasoline and set on fire.

Slowly the pain started to ease off, and when I opened my eyes, I saw giant paws where my hands once were.

Flint lifted his massive head to the moon and released a mighty howl.

We looked over at Alaia and were stunned.

Her wolf closely resembled her own coloring; she had creamy caramel brown fur. But what grabbed our attention, and the focus of everyone in attendance were her eyes. They were a bright purple, and they were glowing.



While the pack seemed to simply be mesmerized by her beauty, we saw something else from the elders.

Flint, what is going on? Why are the elders looking at her like that?

Don't you see Aaron? You are the blessed pair, and she is the Amethyst wolf.

The Amethyst what?!

“An Amethyst wolf,” the head elder whispered.

Well, this night has taken an unexpected turn.

TWENTY-SEVEN | RISE OF A NEW ALPHA

## Chapter 27 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

When Dad and Aaron asked me to join them, I was confused. But Amethyst urged me to step forward, so I did.

I somehow knew that I needed to shift with my twin; now was my time. It was our time.

When I took his hand, the power that moved through us was incredible, and it confirmed that this was where I needed to be.

As I began to shift, I expected to feel extreme amounts of pain, but all I felt was warmth.

I allowed Amethyst to take control, thus making me a spectator in my own body.

I closed my eyes and bent down to the ground, letting the warmth cover me completely.

When it was all over, I looked up and saw a beautiful gray wolf standing where Aaron previously stood.

As any Alpha would be, Aaron's wolf was much larger than the average, but there was also an aura of power emanating from him.

He was going to be a strong and fierce leader.

After a few moments, I noticed that Aaron was staring back at me, like really staring.

I looked around and saw that everyone had their eyes locked on me.

I was beginning to think something had to have gone wrong.

I looked down and saw brown fur and paws, so I knew I had shifted.

Nothing is wrong; we shifted perfectly. They are looking at our eyes, Alaia.

But why? What is wrong with our eyes.

Nothing is wrong with them. They reveal our true selves.

Amethyst stop talking in riddles. I don't understand.

We are the Amethyst wolf, Alaia.

Amethyst, like your name?

One and the same.

So, what does that mean?

My internal dialogue was cut short when I heard the head elder whisper in awe, "An Amethyst wolf."

Well, this seemed to be a big ass deal.

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The same elder who had previously spoke then made a request.

"Alpha Jonathon. If I may, would it be possible to postpone the pack run and Alpha ceremony for a moment? I would like to speak to your family about a matter of great importance. I assure you; I won't take too much time, and we will get right back to naming Aaron the new Alpha."

"Yes, of course."

Dad then turned to the pack to address them directly.

"Opal Moon pack, our elders have requested a brief intermission before we proceed with the pack run and Alpha ceremony. Please allow us this small break and help yourselves to the food and drink while you wait."

Aaron and I shifted back to our human forms and were both given robes to cover up with. I reached down and put the bracelet from Xander back on my wrist before our group made its way to the pack house's common room.

Packed into the space were the four elders, both my parents, Aaron and Jordyn, Beta Lucas, and Xander, Matthew, and myself.

Xander took a seat and pulled me into his lap, discretely tightening my robe around my body.

“So Elder Lewis, what seems to be the problem?” Dad asked.

“Oh no, there is no problem at all, Alpha Jonathon. Quite the opposite, actually. Your children are what the ancient scrolls call an “Amethyst Pair,” a blessed set of twins born only once every thousand years....”

As Elder Lewis spoke, we all listened intently. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Was I to hold powers? I'd always felt so basic; now I was being told I was a rare and unique wolf?

Amethyst pranced around in my mind preening. She had always known she was special; she just had to wait for us to shift for everyone else to find out.

Xander spoke up with a question.

“Elder, when will we know what powers she will have? From what I understand, there could be many different possibilities.”

“Unfortunately, I cannot answer that question, Alpha Xander. It would be up to her wolf to decide when and where to reveal her power. She can have just one, or she could have many. There is no way to know for sure.”

Again, all eyes were turned to me, and I was beginning to get uncomfortable. I never liked being the center of attention when I was just a regular wolf, and this was ten times worst.

I nervously cleared my throat and felt Xander give me a supportive squeeze around my hips.

“Well, this has been eye-opening,” I began, “but if it's okay with you all, I'd like to continue with our regularly scheduled programming. Tonight is supposed to be about Aaron and Jordyn, and I don't want to take that from them.”

The room reluctantly agreed, and we made our way back to the yard.

Aaron shifted into his massive gray wolf again and howled, calling his pack.

Soon all of Opal Moon was standing before us in their wolf form before they took off into the woods after their Alpha.

“You didn’t want to join in the run, Little One?” Xander asked.

“No, this is for him. This run is to strengthen that bond between the pack and their Alpha. I’m no longer a member of this pack; it’s not for me to participate.”

“That’s fair. How are you handling everything? I’m sure you’re more than a bit overwhelmed with tonight’s events.”

“I’m not sure honestly. I mean, yeah, it’s cool that Amethyst is some badass wolf who can’t be harmed by dark magic, but the part about me having powers is a bit weird. I don’t want this to change the way people look at me. I’m still just Alaia; I don’t want to be seen as some untouchable and revered deity.”

“It’s a lot to handle, but I know that if anyone can figure it out, you can.”

“Thanks, Xander. So, this bracelet you gave me. I’m guessing that it does the same thing as my wolf, blocking dark magic?”

I looked up and saw Xander blush a bit. He even looked nervous, how cute!

“Yes, it does. I wanted to be sure that you were 100% safe tonight, so we took a few extra precautions. Are you angry?”

How could I be angry? He had done all that he could to keep me safe so that I could be here and fulfill my destiny. No, what I felt at that moment was anything but anger.

“I love you, Xander. So, so much. Thank you for all of this. I can’t even begin to express how much it all means to me; how much you mean to me.”

I didn’t expect the words to come from my mouth, but when they did, they just felt right.

Xander pulled me up into his signature hug, leaving my feet dangling off the ground.

I reached up and placed my hands on either side of his face and just stared into his crystal blue eyes.

This man owned my soul; I knew it the moment I first saw him. There could never be another but him.

“You have no idea how long I’ve waited to hear those words from your mouth, baby. I love you, too. In this lifetime and the next, for all of eternity. You are mine, and I am yours.”

When our lips finally met for a kiss, it was nothing I had ever experienced before. It was slow and gentle and beautiful.

His lips were pillow-soft, and he moved them with such a gentle finesse that it brought tears to my eyes.

Yes, I was his.

\*\*\*

An hour later, the pack returned to the house, ready to welcome their new Alpha and Luna.

My parents stood on the left side of the stage with Aaron and Jordyn on the right.

Elder Lewis stepped between the four of them and held up the Alphas chalice.

“As has been our tradition since the beginning of our time, we will see the passing of the Alpha title from one to another.

Aaron Miller, firstborn son of Alpha Jonathon Miller of the Opal Moon pack, please step forward.

Alpha Jonathon Miller, of the Opal Moon Pack, please step forward as well.”

Aaron and my dad stepped forward, facing one another.

“Alpha Jonathon, the power of the Alpha flows through your veins; as was passed to your father by his father before him and his father before him, stretching back to the very first werewolf. Are you now ready to pass that power to your son?”

Dad's voice broke, and I saw that he had unshed tears in his eyes. He looked at Aaron with so much pride; I was so happy I was here to witness this.

“Yes, I am ready.”

“Aaron Miller, are you ready to receive the blood of the alpha? To have it flow through your veins and have it grant you the power and wisdom of all those who have come before you?”

“Yes, I am ready.”

My mom then stepped forward and handed Elder Lewis an ancient-looking dagger. It was gold and platinum and in the light of the full moon, I saw one lone wolf engraved into the handle.

Elder Lewis drew the blade across my dad's right palm, then Aaron's.

“Alpha Jonathan, Aaron, please join hands.”

They did as instructed, then lifted their conjoined hands in the air.

I watched a small trickle of blood run down both their wrists, then collect in the chalice held by Elder Lewis. I felt a powerful gust of wind move over the crowd.

All of Opal Moon took a knee and bowed their heads.

“Opal Moon pack, we usher in a new era tonight. Please stand and honor your new alpha, Alpha Aaron Miller.”

The crowd stood and erupted into cheers and howls.

Dad pulled Aaron into a tight hug and let the tears fall freely.

I then realized that I was crying as well; I was so proud of the man my big brother had become.

Once the congratulations were finally finished on stage, Aaron turned to the crowd and raised a hand to silence them.

“Opal Moon pack, tonight we also welcome your new Luna. Jordyn Hall, please step forward.”

She took a few steadying breaths and walked over to Aaron at the center of the stage.

“Jordyn Hall, do you vow here tonight to always protect and honor the members of the Opal Moon pack to the best of your abilities until your final breath?”

“I vow to do so.”

“And do you vow always to support your Alpha, to stand by his side, and to guide him to the best of your abilities until your final breath?”

“I vow to do so.”

Aaron then took the same golden dagger that had been used on himself and made a thin slice on Jordyn’s right palm.

She then balled her hand into a fist and allowed a few drops of blood to collect in the Alpha’s chalice Aaron was holding.

Just like before, we felt a strong breeze sweep over the crowd, which again brought the entire pack down on one knee.

“Opal Moon pack, please rise and honor our new Luna.”

More cheers and howls filled the night’s sky.

It was the beginning of a new chapter for the Opal Moon pack, and no one could have been better suited for the challenge.

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As we continued to celebrate, Aaron announced that in the interim, Lucas would remain on as Beta until a permanent replacement could be found.

The news saddened me because Aaron should have been able to celebrate this night with his best friend, but it seemed he was lost to us.

Aaron didn't deserve this, and soon the sadness was replaced by anger. I was angry at Alexi and the stupid choices he made, which led to this point.

Jason, the lead warrior, was named Gamma, which I thought was a very suitable position for him.

As the music began to play, we all moved towards the considerable buffet my mom had organized and began to fill our plates.

I caught Jordyn in the line and pulled her into a huge hug.

"Congratulations, Luna, you looked beautiful up there...and very bad-ass."

She laughed out loud at that before thanking me and turning back to the buffet.

"I was so nervous I didn't eat anything all day. I didn't want it to come up while I was on stage. I'm making up for that big-time now."

We headed over to the head table and sat down beside our mates.

I leaned my head on Xander's arm and looked out over the happy faces. This was such a beautiful moment to be a part of.

An omega made her way around the table, filling out glasses with what appeared to be wine before she disappeared into the crowd.

I raised my glass in preparation to make a toast to the new Alpha, and Luna then noticed that the stone on my bracelet was glowing and letting off a bright light.

Xander seemed to notice it too as he shot to his feet and knocked the wine glass out of my hand.

He spun me around and cupped my face in his hands, looking directly into my eyes.

"How are you feeling, Baby? Your eyes are glowing purple, Alaia."

Well shit...

## Chapter 28 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Unknown POV

When the young omega walked into my chambers, I could smell her fear.

It was oozing from her pores and, to me, smelled like the sweetest treat.

“Did you do what I asked of you?” I commanded, making her small body tremble.

“Yes, I placed the poison in her drink,” she replied, so weak and timid.

“AND?!”

“Sh-she didn’t drink it, mistress.”

“What do you mean she didn’t drink it? Why the fuck not?!”

I flew into a rage, and before I knew it, my hand was wrapped around the omegas small, frail neck, and I was lifting her in the air.

Her eyes began to bulge from their sockets as she scraped her brittle nails across my skin, begging me to release her.

“She p-picked up the g-glass but then her eyes...they turned purple! The bracelet she was wearing began to glow!”

What? What was happening? I dropped the omega and took a step back from her disgusting body.

“What else happened?”

She gulped for air before she replied, “Her mate...he knocked her glass to the ground and spilled the poison.”

I saw red, and I snapped.

“He. Is. Not. HER. MATE!!”



I charged her small body and rained blow after blow down upon it. I heard her arm snap when I slammed my foot down on it.

She screamed in pain, begged for mercy, but I had none.

My claws came out, and I slashed them across the omega's neck before ending her pathetic excuse for a life and watching the light drain from her eyes.

"Well, that was entertaining. Ever heard of the phrase 'Don't shoot the messenger'?" I heard a voice say before its owner crossed the room.

"Oh, fuck off, sister, I don't have time for your shit today."

"I'm guessing your little plan didn't work the way you expected it to now, did it? Are you ready to accept my help now?"

I stalked over to my chair and threw myself down into it.

I had planned this out meticulously, what had gone wrong?

"Listen, I know you want to get rid of that bitch, but your plan just won't work. She's an Amethyst wolf. None of your silly little potions will have any effect on her."

My head snapped up, and I stared right into my sisters' eyes.

"She's what?"

"Doesn't matter. Listen, I'm going to help you out here, and in the end, we'll both get what we want. What do you say?"

My sister was an evil bitch, and I knew that if she wanted something bad enough, she'd stop at nothing to get it. And I could use all the help I could get.

"And what exactly is it that you want?" I asked.

She just stood there checking her nails; I wasn't going to get an answer out of her. At least not yet anyway.

"Fine, I'll accept your help. What did you have in mind?"

"First things first, we've got to get out of here. They'll be looking for this omega, and we don't want to be here when they find her."

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Xander POV

As soon as Alaia lifted her glass of wine, I saw her bracelet let off a bright purple light.

Immediately I was on my feet, and I knocked the wine to the ground.

When I looked into her eyes and saw that same purple glow, I knew that someone had tried to get to her.

“How are you feeling, Baby? Your eyes are glowing purple, Alaia.”

She looked up at me, confused, and said, “I’m fine, Xander. I don’t feel any different at all.”

I linked Matt.

Matt, find that omega that just served wine to the head table!

What’s happened, Xander?

As soon as Alaia touched the glass she was served, her bracelet and eyes lit up like fucking Christmas trees. I want that omega found now!!

Got it, Xan. I’ll take care of it right away.

Once I was finished with Matt, I saw that everyone was already on their feet, huddled around Alaia.

“Let’s move into the house,” I suggested to Aaron, who nodded in agreement.

I grabbed Alaia’s hand before rushing back towards the packhouse with Aaron, Jordyn, and the parents close behind.

When we were again in the common room, I sat Alaia down and studied her face.

Her eyes were back to the beautiful golden brown I had grown to love, so I knew she was out of danger.

“Xander, baby, I’m fine really. Nothing happened. If anything, we can call this a test run for my powers. Amethyst quickly reacted when I touched the glass alerting us to the danger. This is a good thing.”

“Baby, someone tried to poison you. How is this good?”

“Well obviously that part isn’t the greatest, but my wolf’s reaction to it was. Please, don’t worry so much.”

I looked at her, and she was right. Her wolf had done precisely what the elders said it would do, and I was beyond relieved.

But I needed to get her back home. I needed her safe.

“Alpha Aaron, I’m sorry to cut the evening short, but I need to get Alaia back home to our pack. I don’t know who that omega was, and until she is found, I cannot feel comfortable with Alaia remaining here.”

I saw hurt and anger flash across Aaron’s face. His first night as alpha and someone had tried to poison his little sister, at his alpha ceremony at that.

“I understand Alpha Xander. I believe your warriors, along with a few of mine, are still out looking for the omega in question. Is it your intention to leave them behind while you and Alaia return to your territory?”

Shit. I had completely forgotten that I had sent my team to follow the trail.

As I was about to speak, Matt linked me.

Xander, we found her. Or what’s left of her.

Someone’s killed her?

Yes. It looks like she was pretty badly beaten before her throat was slashed. We probably missed whoever did this by minutes. They left no trail and no scent behind, so it looks to be a dead end.

Fine. See if there is anything around the omegas body you can find that may help then come back to the packhouse. We’ll be leaving as soon as you arrive.

Got it. We’ll be there soon.

“They found her?” Aaron asked.

“Yes, whoever she was working with beat her, then slashed her throat and left without a trace. My men will look for anything that may help us before heading back here.”

Ten minutes later, Matt walked in and handed me a small empty vial.

“This is all we found. I’m not sure what good it will do, but maybe we can find out what witch made the poison and have them lead us to whoever is behind all this.”

“Thank you, Matt. Let’s get ready to head home.”

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While Alaia said her goodbyes, I rolled the small vile between my thumb and forefinger, deep in thought.

Whoever had done this was bold, but they were not expecting her to be an Amethyst wolf. I'm sure that they knew now, that was probably the last secret the omega spilled before her blood quickly followed.

This attempt also told me that whoever was behind it knew Alaia would be here. It seemed too well-executed to have been a spur of the moment decision.

I had to be smart, and I had to be diligent. I'd find out who was responsible and when I did, I'd rip them limb from limb, but not before they begged me for death.

A sweet melodious voice pulled me from my murderous thoughts.

I focused my eyes and looked down at Alaia. She looked worried, staring up at me.

"Your eyes have gone so dark, Xander. Please don't let this change the man you are, the man I love. I need you."

She was my angel.

"I'm sorry, Little One."

I pulled her up into my chest and buried my head in her hair. I just needed to smell her. I needed to feel her under my body. I needed her.

"Let's go home, baby."

We then set off back to our territory, not knowing that we were being watched along our journey.

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Alaia POV

I must have fallen asleep on the car ride because I woke to find myself cradled in Xander's lap while he gently undressed me. We were sitting in the sitting area of our room.

Moonlight streamed through the window and caressed his beautiful face.

I lifted a hand and ran it through his silky black curls causing him to look down at me.

"Go back to sleep, Little One. It's been a long day, and you need your rest."

I grabbed a handful of those curls and pulled his face down to mine.

"I just need you, Xander...please."

He looked into my eyes for a moment longer before he captured my lips in a beautifully passionate kiss.

Xander nipped at my bottom lip, causing my mouth to open with a sharp gasp.

He then took advantage of this and swiped his tongue inside, tasting everything I was. And allowing me to taste him as well.

I started to fumble at the buttons of his shirt; I needed to feel his skin against mine, urgently.

When my fingers didn't move fast enough, I ripped the shirt open, sending buttons flying in all different directions.

I ran my hands over his glorious chest and traced the lines of his tattoo with my fingertips.

I finally pulled away from our kiss and trailed my mouth across his jaw then flicked my tongue on his Adam's apple.

The low rumble in his chest at my actions made my panties wet, and soon the smell of my arousal filled the air.

I dipped my head a bit lower and clamped my teeth down onto Xander's left nipple.

He growled at the sensation and quickly stood and pressed my back against the wall.

My legs were wrapped around his muscular waist as his hands roamed my curves.

When he found his way between my legs, Xander ripped my panties from my body and tossed them to the floor.

I then felt him make quick work of his belt buckle and pants before he was completely naked and pressed against me.

"I'm going to fuck you now, baby. And I want you to scream for me, do you understand."

"Yes, Daddy...please..."

I didn't get to finish my plea. In one powerful thrust, Xander had rammed his entire length into my core, slamming directly into my cervix.

A scream ripped from my throat; I don't think I had ever felt as full as I had at that moment.

My eyes rolled back, and black dots clouded my vision. I was going to pass out after just one thrust.

"No! Not yet, Little One!"

Xander began to brutally piston his hips, smashing them into my pelvis harder and harder.

The sound of skin slapping together, and our guttural moans echoed off the walls.

I dug my nails into his back and tightened my legs around his waist, but I felt myself slipping from my post.

Xander relocated his arms and placed them under my knees with his hands flat against the wall.

I was spread wide open and entirely at his mercy. But this wasn't a time for mercy, and I received none.

He pummeled my soaked and swollen pussy again and again and again.

My orgasms were coming one after the other nonstop, and Xander was like a machine. A man possessed, he never slowed down, and he never let up.

He buried his teeth into his mark on my neck, and white-hot heat burst through my body.

I cried out at the sensation.

Xander then roared so loudly; the windows shook as he spilled his seed in my womb. I felt the hot thick spurts as he coated my walls in his life-giving cum.

I felt our juices mix and slide out of my slit as Xander continued to pump his hips against me.

When it felt that he had nothing more left to give, he slowly pulled out then lowered his arms, placing me on wobbly and cramped legs.

My lips were swollen, my hair was a bird's nest, and my face was soaked with tears.

The inside of my thighs was covered in the essence we had created.

Xander then grabbed a handful of my hair and yanked backward.

“You're so fucking beautiful, and you're MINE!”

“Yes, I'm yours, Xander. Only yours.”

"No one will take you from me!"

Xander's eyes had become endless pools of black; his wolf was trying to come out.

I was spun around, and my face pressed roughly against the wall.

Xander used one foot to spread my feet farther apart before he squatted down and entered me from behind.

His fingers were digging into my hips as he viscously yanked me back against him.

My feet were off the ground, and there was nothing for me to use to gain my bearings.

I pulled my feet backward and hooked them behind his massive legs, trying to get just the slightest bit of leverage.

I then tried to hold on to his wrists, but that just left my face being rubbed violently against the wall.

I cried out in pain.

And still, he continued.

My body was weak and growing weaker with each thunderous thrust he unleashed on me.

But in my heart, I knew that this was not Xander. This was not the man I loved.

“Xander...please baby...ss-slow down...”

He didn't seem like he could hear me; he went faster, he went harder.

“XANDER!! PLEASE!!” I screamed, I begged, but he was lost in a deep fog and couldn't be found. I couldn't reach him.

Fat tears ran down my face, but these were not tears born from pleasure, these were born from pain.

It felt like my heart was going to explode; I couldn't take this.

With the last bit of energy I could muster, I opened my mouth and whispered,  
“Xander...Innocence.”

And then I went limp, and I let the darkness take me.

TWENTY-NINE | I AM ALASTAIR

## **Chapter 29 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired**

Xander POV

“Xander...Innocence.”

My eyes snapped open, immediately the fog and haze cleared out.

What the fuck had I done?

I had lost control to the point where Alaia felt the need to use her safe word. I never wanted that to happen.

I wanted her to experience pleasures unknown when she was with me, and I failed.

I couldn't believe I had let myself become so weak. I had snapped and lost control, and Alaia was caught in the crossfire.

I stared down at her, utterly slack in my arms. She had passed out, and I hadn't even realized that I had pushed her that far.

I looked at the sickly black and blue bruises on her perfect hips, I could almost see my fingerprints in them.

I had dug my nails into her flawless brown skin and drawn blood. I couldn't believe I had done this.

I carried her tiny body in my arms and walked into the bathroom before slowly lowering her into the bathtub.

Once she was safely positioned, I opened the faucet and filled the tub with warm soapy water.

When it was finally full, I let her head lull to the side while I began to wash away all traces of my shame from her.

“Xander...Innocence.”

Those words played over and over in my head like a broken record. Broken. I had broken my angel.

She didn't deserve any of this. I had let myself get so caught up in the thought of someone trying to take her from me that I lost sight of who I was.

I lost sight of the man she had fallen in love with.

Tears began to roll down my face, and I didn't hold them back.



I no longer had anything to hide from her; she deserved to see all of me.

Once she was clean, I lifted her from the bath and sat her on my lap while I dried her off.

I then carried her to the room and placed her on our bed.

I grabbed her body butter from her bedside table drawer and began to smooth it over her perfect skin, massaging it deep into her muscles.

When my eyes fell on her hips again, I was relieved to see the bruises already starting to heal.

Her body would recover, but would her heart? Would her soul ever move on from something like this?

When I was finished, I climbed into bed behind her and pulled her against my chest. When she woke, she would likely want nothing to do with me, so, for now, I would take this closeness before it was taken away from me.

I shut my eyes and drifted off into a restless sleep.

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Alaia POV

I slowly opened my eyes and looked into the face of my mate, my everything.

His eyes were shut but I could see that they were puffy and red-rimmed.

There were dark circles under his usually brilliant eyes, and even in his sleep, deep creases danced across his forehead.

I brought my hand up and lightly ran my fingers across his face, trying anything I could to ease the tension.

Xander's eyes snapped open and locked onto mine. I saw love and.. regret?

“Little One, I am so incredibly sorry for what I did to you. I never meant to lose control like that. If you can find it in your heart to forgive me, I promise it will never happen again. Please...”

His last word was a plea from deep within his soul, and it broke my heart.

“Xander, baby, you have nothing to apologize to me for. You didn't do anything wrong.”

His eyes went wide when he stared.

“What do you mean, ‘I did nothing wrong’? I hurt you! Bruised your skin, I made you bleed! And worst of all, I made you feel unsafe.”

Then I remembered.

I had used my safe word last night. I couldn’t think of anything else to bring him back to me, and I needed him back desperately.

I saw a tear run from his beautiful blue eye, and I leaned over and kissed it away.

“Xander, look at me. Please.”

When he finally lifted his eyes to meet mine, I placed my hands on either side of his face.

“Xander, last night was intense, but it also wasn’t you. I knew that your wolf was at the surface fighting to come out. With all the heightened emotions swirling through the both of us, I couldn’t blame him. I saw his eyes, Xander. I could have tried to stop him before it even started, but I didn’t.

When I said that I wanted you, I meant just that. I want all of you—the good and the bad, the rough and the gentle. Don’t hold back from me. I’m a big girl; I can take it; I promise you that.”

“Are you serious right now? You don’t know how hard it has been for me to hide that part of who I am. But I did it because I’d do anything to keep from hurting you.”

I crawled onto his lap and straddled him.

“What’s your wolf’s name? Can I meet him?”

“No. Not after last night. It will be a long time before I allow him back out around you.”

“Xander, he’s a part of you. I know he won’t hurt me. Please?”

Xander took a deep breath and shook his head.

“Alaia...please.”

I leaned down and placed a slow and gentle kiss on his lips. We both needed to do this.

“Please, baby?”

I gave him my signature innocent face and knew that I had him.

“Ugh! You know I can’t deny you when you make that face.”

Xander then closed his eye and took a few deep breaths through his nose.

When his eyes snapped back open, they were once again deep pools of ebony.

“MINE,” He growled while wrapping his arms tightly around my waist and pulling me closer to his chest.

He then buried his head in the crook of my neck and inhaled deeply.

“My mate, you’re so beautiful.”

He stuck out his tongue and ran it over my mark, sending chills down my spine.

“H-hello,” I got out.

He looked into my eyes and said, “YOU. ARE. MINE.”

“Yes, I’m yours. Yours and Xander’s. What is your name?”

He again buried his head in my neck when I heard him say, “I am Alastair.”

He began to slowly rotate my hips, grinding me against his slowly growing bulge. I knew that I had to stop this, and fast because my body was already starting to abort the mission at hand.

I pulled his head back so that we were once again looking at each other eye to eye.

“It’s nice to meet you, Alastair. Would you do something for me?”

“I’d do anything for you, my love.”

“Good,” I smiled, “I need you to apologize to Xander.”

Alastair looked at me with confusion written all over his face.

“When you took over, you did so without his consent. Xander no longer had the ability to reign you in, and you ended up hurting me.”

Alastair’s confusion was replaced by sadness and remorse.

“I’m alright now, but Xander isn’t. I love both of you, and I need you to make this right with him. How would you feel if you thought you had lost control and hurt me? You’d probably be a broken mess just like he is now. Please do this for him, for me?”

“Of course, anything for you.”

“Thank you, Alastair.” I placed a gentle kiss on the tip of his nose, which made him growl with pleasure.

Alastair's eyes then glazed over and started darting back and forth, really fast.

After a few moments, his eyes opened again, but they were Xander's crystal blue ones.

"Did you boys have a nice chat?" I asked with a smirk.

"I don't know what you said to him. Usually, all our conversations end with him telling me how much of an idiot or asshole I am. He's definitely never apologized before. Thank you for that, Alaia. I didn't know how much I needed until now."

"Eh, he was furry putty in my hands. It was nothing."

Xander sniffed the air then looked at me with a raised eyebrow.

"Don't look at me like that! Alastair has this sexy, dominant, alpha male thing going for him. My body knows what it wants," I ended with a shrug.

"Alastair is a mindless horny animal who can't be trusted around anyone, especially you," Xander grumbled.

His pouting made me laugh, hard.

"Xander, you can't really be jealous of another part of yourself, can you?"

"No, but you're mine, and he knows that."

Now it was my turn to raise an eyebrow.

"I'm his as well. Keeping him locked away is probably what started this whole mess in the first place. Maybe I should have you apologize to him too?"

Xander looked panicked when I said that, he did NOT want to have to apologize to his wolf.

"I'm just kidding, baby."

I then gave him the same kiss I had given to Alastair moments earlier, a gentle peck on the tip of his nose.

I giggled when he had the same reaction his wolf did.

"So, are we okay, Little One?"

"Yes, we're okay."

\*\*\*

After a bit more talking cuddled up in bed, eventually, Xander and I made our way downstairs to the kitchen for breakfast.

When we arrived, Matt and Kade were already seated, talking quietly to one another.

“Matty-Ice, how’s it going, my man?” I said, bouncing over to sit across from Matt.

“Good morning, Bean. You seem to be in a good mood today.”

“Of course! I’m about to have breakfast with some of my favorite guys. Why wouldn’t I be?”

Kade looked at our exchange like he was watching an alien abduction.

“Matty-Ice? Bean? Xander, what the hell is going on here, man?”

“Well, Alaia said they’d be the best of friends. Looks like she was right.”

“I would sure as hell like to know what went down last night. I’m starting to feel like a 3rd no, a 4th wheel.”

Xander sat down next to me just as my breakfast was being served.

I took a huge bite of my croissant and listened while the guys filled Kade in on the events of last night.

“So, who do you think it was who tried to poison your wine, Alaia?”

I almost choked on the mouthful of food I was chewing. I didn’t expect Kade to ask me when the guys were right here with theories of their own. And I really didn’t expect him to ignore the whole “Amethyst wolf” thing.

“I can’t say for sure. We don’t know what the poison would have done to me if I had drunk it. If Alexi was behind this, the poison would have probably been something mild. Maybe something to knock me out so that he could kidnap me or something?”

All three guys nodded their heads, thinking over what I was saying.

“It could have also been someone who knew I was the Amethyst wolf and wanted me for my powers, which I still don’t fully know about myself. But then again, if that were the case, they would have known that the poison wouldn’t work. Maybe it was a test of some sort.”

“Yes, I thought of that one as well, Bean. I had a feeling you were the Amethyst wolf before you shifted, and I shared that thought with Xander. If anyone else was paying attention, they might have picked up on the signs as well. They would have to have been someone extremely close to you to notice, but a test and confirmation of your abilities sounds like a possibility.”

Kade rolled his eyes at Matt.

“Anyway, Alaia ...” he emphasized my name as if to tell Matt that “Bean” was unacceptable.

“Do you have any other theories?”

“My last theory is the toughest. Maybe it was someone not even on our radar. Someone I pissed off at school, a jealous ex of Alexi’s or Xander’s, or a bored and curious witch. It could have been anyone really, and it’d be tough to zero in on them.”

“Wow, that makes things difficult. I guess we’ll just have to start with the vile that Matt found. That’s all we’ve got at this point.”

Xander, seemingly distracted by something, cleared his throat beside me and looked over at Matt.

“Matt, I’ve got a question for you.”

“What’s up?”

“Why ‘Bean’?”

I had to admit that I was curious, as well.

Matt realized what Xander was asking then shrugged a shoulder.

“Simple. It’s because Alaia’s small. Like a tiny little ‘bean.’”

They guys all had a good laugh hearing that.

Best friend, my ass...

THIRTY | DEATH BY EMBARRASSMENT

Alaia POV

We had been back home for a few days, and things were getting back to normal, or as “normal” as they could be with a Luna ceremony around the corner.

Katherine was like a mini drill sergeant, providing strict instruction to the entire staff for the event.

I made the mistake of entering the common room one afternoon to find her giving a florist hell because they suggested tulips instead of lilies in the centerpieces.

“Xander!” I whispered, while slowly backing from the room.

“Yes, Little One?”

“Has your mom always been this intense? They are just flowers, no big deal, right? I mean, what’s it going to be like when we get married?!”

“You want to marry me?” he asked, completely straying from the topic at hand.

“Xander, focus! It was a hypothetical question.”

“So, hypothetically...you want to marry me?”

“Ugh! No... I mean not hypothetically, so yes; I guess?”

“Mom!”

When Xander called him mom, I squeaked with shock. Was he going to tell her I called her intense?!

Katherine came over with her hand over the receiver of her phone.

“Xander, sweetie, I’m a bit busy getting the ceremony together. What do you need?”

“I need you also to plan a wedding, Alaia here said that she wants to marry me.”

My jaw dropped, and my eyes almost popped out. He did not just do that!

Katherine slowly raised the phone to her ear and said to the person on the other end, “New development, I’ll have to call you back.”

She quickly shut off the phone then looked at the two of us.

“Xander, don’t mess with me, son. You know how long I’ve been waiting to plan your wedding. Are you serious right now?”

“Alaia, am I serious?”

“Uhh. Well, I-he asked if I wanted to, b-but it was hypothetical?”

I was so confused; my statement was absolutely posed more as a question than an answer.

Did I want to marry Xander, of course, I did. One day. But definitely after a better proposal.

Xander looked at my rapidly paling face then roared with laughter.

I let out a whoosh of air and crumpled into the nearest chair.

“Xander Emanuel Black! What is wrong with you? Why would you do something like that to her?”

“I couldn’t help it; she just gets so cute when she’s nervous.”

“And what about me? I thought I was going to be a grandma, finally!”

“I’ve been working on it, Mom. Vigorously.”

Xander sent me a wink then again burst out laughing before leaving the room, leaving an extremely embarrassed me behind to clean up his mess.

“Alaia, I apologize for my son. Xavier was the exact same way when we were your age. It was his mission to embarrass me daily in front of his mother.”

“Oh, thank the Goddess!”

Katherine looked at me, confused before I finally explained myself.

“I’m just so happy that you understand. That man is going to give me a heart attack. Can embarrassment cause a heart attack?”

“That I’m not too sure about, but I understand your pain, sweetie. And just to be clear, have you really been working on my grandchildren...vigorously?”

She raised an eyebrow, and I immediately saw where Xander got that trait from.

My face turned bright red. Seriously?!

Katherine turned to leave, and before she was out of earshot, I heard her yell, “I’m not getting any younger!”

\*\*\*

I decided that I would spend the rest of my day without the presence of males around; or Katherine. I’d been embarrassed enough to last a lifetime.

I called Kimmy and Cassie and asked them over for a small barbecue/pool party.

It was insanely hot, and we hadn’t yet had the chance to take advantage of the pools fantastic water slide.

The ladies arrived shortly after, along with little Sophie, and after linking my phone to the Bluetooth speaker nearby, we had a party!



“So Alaia, are you nervous? The Luna ceremony is in three days!” Kimmy said while excitedly bouncing on her toes.

I leaned forward on my lawn chair and pulled my sunglasses down a bit to look at her over them.

She looked like a kid in a candy store; I couldn't help but giggle.

“I wouldn't say I'm nervous. I mean, I'm ready for the responsibility that comes with being this pack's Luna, but I have a bad feeling.”

“A bad feeling about being our Luna?” Cassie asked with a sad look on her face.

“No. I can't wait to be Luna; I have a bad feeling that something will go wrong at the ceremony.”

“Ha! My mom would murder anyone who so much as placed a crouton incorrectly on the salad. I think the ceremony is beyond covered.”

“You do have a valid point there, Kim. Maybe it is nerves,” I said with a shrug.

Just then, one of the pack's chefs, Geoffrey, came out of the house with a humongous pile of meats on a platter. He headed for the large built-in barbecue area and began arranging it all on a grill.

“Wow Alaia, is just three women and a four-year-old. Why did you request so much food?” Cassie asked.

“Uhm, I didn't. I just asked for a few burgers and hotdogs. And I swear Geoff just put a slab of dinosaur ribs in that smoker.”

When he was finished, he began to walk back to the house before I stopped him.

“Hi, Geoff!”

“Good afternoon, Luna. Your barbecue will be ready shortly. We already have many of the sides you requested chilling in the kitchen.”

Was someone hijacking my barbecue? The only sides I requested were Doritos.

“Geoff, who asked you to prepare so much food? It's just the four of us here,” I said, pointing to the ladies behind me.

“The Alpha did, Miss. Maybe he wanted to make sure you had a nice afternoon.”

Yeah...sure.

“Okay, thank you, Geoff.”

“Anytime, Luna.”

He then walked back inside.

“Ladies, I believe we’ve-”

Then the three pains in my ass I was hoping to avoid this afternoon walked into the backyard.

Wearing just swim trunks and smirks. They were here to crash my party.

I turned to Cassie and Kim to come up with a quick plan to get rid of the guys, but I immediately saw that wasn’t going to happen. I was on my own.

Kim, being an unmated female, began to drool when she saw a shirtless and suntan oil-covered Matt.

Cassie was a little better, but not much.

She had a mate, so Matthew didn’t have the same effect on her, but her jaw was damn near on the ground watching the three of them walk over.

I sat back on my chair in a panic.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake, ladies! Get your shit together; they are just men! You’re stronger than this! We’re stronger than this! And they are here crashing our party,” I frantically whispered, not wanting Sophie to hear me swear.

And then in unison, those traitors said, “They can stay.”

Where was the loyalty?

I threw my hands up in frustration. They did this on purpose. The looks on their smug faces told me so!

Xander strolled right up to me and stopped an inch in front of my face.

I was eye level with his impeccably carved abs and pecs. And he smelled so damn good.

No! He wouldn’t just waltz in on my man-free afternoon like this.

“X-Xander...Uh, what...”

Damn you, traitorous hormones!

He reached out and placed a finger under my chin, lifting my face so I could look up at him.

“You don’t mind if we join your pool party, do you, Baby?”

Wait! Was he using his Dom tone on me? Now? Well, he had another thing coming.

“It’s fine, I guess. You’re already here, and Geoff is making more than enough food,” I said with a shrug.

He raised his signature eyebrow at me, a question and a warning.

“You sure that’s the answer you want to go with, Little One?”

“Yep,” I said, popping the “P.”

He quickly bent down, wrapped an arm around my waist and scooped me up off the chair.

Then he lowered his voice and whispered directly in my ear, “You’re being a naughty girl, baby. And Daddy will punish you for that tonight.”

He then nipped at my mark and set me back on my feet.

“Let’s go, boys, I think the pool is calling our names.”

I turned and watched them jog over to the pool and dive in.

“Damn...”

I was surrounded by traitors.

\*\*\*

The ladies and I finally decided to get back in the water and enjoy ourselves. It was still a ridiculously hot day.

I dove into the deep end, and when I came up, I ran straight into a wall.

I pushed my hair back out of my face and wiped my eyes to see that Xander was standing right in front of me.

“Xander! You could have broken my nose with this chest of yours. What are you doing standing here?”

He didn’t answer; he just looked me up and down. He then reached under the water and wrapped his hands behind my thighs before saying, “Up.”

I gave a small leap and wrapped my legs around his waist.

We spent a few moments just looking at each other before he broke the silence.

“You’re beautiful, Alaia.”

“Yay! Mom was right! You two are working on a niece for me to spoil!”

“Ugh, what is it with the women in your family trying to rent out my uterus?!”

“It’s not just the women, Little One.”

And there go those damned hormones again.

\*\*\*

We splashed around for about an hour or so before Geoff came to let us know the food was ready.

We all toweled off and headed over to the tables he had set up for us.

There was enough food to feed a small army and the way the guys were piling their plates; we would have no problem clearing it all out.

We all sat down and began to dig in.

Sophie was sitting between her mom and me when she leaned over and whispered, “He’s pretty, can I keep him?”

I looked up to see she was pointing to Matt, and I burst out laughing.

This was perfect. All day I was the butt of all the jokes, but now it’s was someone else’s turn.

I was going to seize this opportunity big time; you know...carpe diem and all that jazz.

I took a sip of my Sprite before I cleared my throat, making sure I had the attention of the entire table.

“Hey, Matt?”

“What’s up, Bean?”

“Did you know that your powers of persuasion also work on children?”

He looked genuinely confused by my question, so I elaborated a bit more.

“Little Miss Sophie here pointed out to me that you were pretty. She’d like to know if she could keep you.”

The usually shy Sophie sent him the biggest brightest smile I had ever seen.

Perfect!

I watched Matt swallow hard and look around the table.

“Uhh, it’s what? Keep me? I-I guess? No, I mean, no!”

Matt jumped up and walked off to the house, mumbling under his breath while we all doubled over in laughter.

“Where is he going?” Sophie asked with a small pout.

I said the first thing that came to mind.

“He had to go potty; he’ll be right back.”

She made a small “o” with those adorable little lips of hers then went back to eating her hotdog.

I laughed to myself, satisfied with the outcome of my afternoon.

Payback is a bitch...

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Alexi POV

I woke up with a pounding headache, covered in a thick film of dirt, sweat, and blood. My body felt like I had been hit by a train-twice.

I had no idea where I was or how I had gotten there.

Looking around, I saw that I was in a makeshift bedroom decorated in red and black. It looked like a cliché vampire’s bedroom.

“What the fuck is going on?” I said to myself. Something wasn’t right; why couldn’t I recollect anything from the past few days?

Just then, I heard a knock on the door that made me jump.

Then I remembered, I may not know what’s going on, but I was still a beta and a warrior.

“Get your shit together, Alexi; we’re better than this,” I said, giving myself a quick pep talk.

Whoever it was, I wouldn't let them intimidate me.

I steeled my voice then said, "Come in."

When the door opened, I thought I was seeing things. This couldn't be real.

The man before me was ragged and torn. He had claw marks covering his face and torso that were oozing infection and death.

He smelled of rot and decay. He was a rogue.

When had rogues captured me? Maybe they were the reason for my memory loss.

"Alpha Maximus, we are ready for you now."

He then bowed his head and backed out of the room, closing the door behind him.

Alpha? Maximus? But why would he call me by my wolf's name?

Don't you see Alexi? You weren't strong enough to get her back. It's your fault she left us. So, I took things into my own hands.

Max? What the fuck have you done? Why don't I remember anything?

Because you're weak and pathetic! I have to do everything. I've been in control ever since we left the pack hospital. And I'll remain in power until I have my mate back. You can thank me later when she's pregnant with our pups.

Listen to me, Max, we have to let this go. She's moved on now. There has to be someone else out there for us. Just let Alaia go.

Someone else? No one else! She's special, rare, and one of a kind. She was mine until you fucked things up for me. Now I'm going to get her back.

Max, you can't do this shit, man. She's finally happy; she deserves to be happy!

How can she be happy with him?! No, we are her one real mate. You made a mistake, and now I have to fix it. You know what? It's time for you to go back to sleep now, Alexi. My pack needs their Alpha, so I've got to go. Maybe once my plan is complete, and I've gotten her back I'll let you back out so you can witness Alaia writhing underneath us as we ravage her delicious little body, over and over. But that's only if you're a good boy. Talk soon.

Then it was like someone shut off all the lights, and I was consumed in total darkness. My body began to float on what felt like a thick sticky sea of tar that I just couldn't escape.

I was being pushed back to the furthest recesses of my mind.

How was I going to get out of this? I had to save Alaia from myself.

THIRTY-ONE | HUMMING A MELODY

## Chapter 30 - Once Rejected, Twice Desired

Alaia POV

I'd just finished my final dress fitting for the Luna ceremony that was set for the next night.

Katherine suggested that I wear the same dress that she, and the past four Lunas for the Blue Moon pack, wore on the night they took the title.

It was a beautiful white satin dress with lace at the sleeves and bodice. It had a generous plunging neckline, which made me wonder who exactly was designing these dresses back in the day.

It was very form-fitting, and although it would drag on the ground a bit when I walked, I wouldn't say it had a train.

Anyway, because of my short stature and curvy figure, we had to have the dress altered to fit correctly.

Once the seamstress and Katherine released me from their clutches, I made my way to Xander's office.

I hadn't seen much of him since the barbecue, and I was starting to worry.

Lately, he was always cooped up in his office with Kade and Matthew, sometimes until the early hours of the morning.

I arrived in front of the door, and as I was raising my hand to knock, I heard muffled voices talking about increased rogue sightings.

I had been feeling strange lately like I was being watched, but I could never find anyone there when I would look around. I wondered if the rogue sightings could have anything to do with that.

Since I wasn't a fan of snooping around, I proceeded to knock on the door and waited to be told to come in.

The guys looked so tired and worn when I walked in. Like they hadn't had a good night's sleep in days. Working so hard without taking a break wasn't good for them, and definitely not suitable for the pack. I had to see what I could do to help.

“Guys, what’s going on?”

Kade and Matt looked over at Xander to see what they should do. Should they fill me in on what had been going on, or keep quiet?

I could see Xander battling with the decision to tell me or not as well. I didn't say anything about what I had heard before I walked in; I wanted to see what he would say to me and what he would do.

“We’ve had an increase in rogue sightings. On the territory, not just along the border. Even with our increased security measures, they are still somehow getting past the patrols. So far, they haven’t done anything but watch our movements, but we don’t know what their motives are.”

“Where have they been spotted?”

This must have been a tough question because all three guys shifted uncomfortably in their seats and refused to make eye contact with me.

Again, Xander spoke up.

“Usually in the woods around the packhouse, and we’ve noticed their pattern. They are watching you, Alaia. Whenever we do spot them, they are either somewhere you are, or somewhere you've just left. This is why I haven't let you out of the house alone in the past few days.”

I knew it! I knew I wasn't crazy when I kept feeling those creepy-ass stares all the time.

“Have they left anything behind that we can track them with?”

They all looked shocked that I wasn't freaking out over the fact that rogues were stalking me in my own home. I was shocked myself, but I knew that I needed to stay calm if I was going to get the information I needed from Xander.

“Uhh, nothing that’s traceable. I believe there was a scrap of clothing left in a tree yesterday,” Kade told me.

“Could I see it?”

More blank stares...

“Come on, guys! Let me help. I’m just sitting around here doing nothing all day, and we all know that I have powers, maybe I can help figure something out. What do we have to lose at this point?”



Xander sighed before walking to his safe and opening it up.

He reached in and pulled out a clear bag with a dingy piece of ripped jean fabric inside and handed it over to me.

As soon as the bag touched my hand, my fingers began to tingle, and the guys huddled around me.

“The rogues are using dark magic to get past the border unseen. I don’t know who the witch is, or what they want but it’s definitely dark magic.”

“We figured as much. There was no way our patrols were constantly missing them cross over. I’m guessing the spell just allowed them to get onto our land but didn’t prevent us from seeing them once they were here,” Matt thought out loud.

“Maybe they wanted to be seen. Maybe it’s part of the plan? We see a bunch of rogues so close to the house, so we cancel the Luna ceremony or move me to a different location, maybe?”

Xander slumped back down in his chair and heaved out a sigh.

I wished I could do something to make him feel better, even if only for a little while.

Moving without even really thinking, I went over, sat in his lap, and held his head close against my chest.

As I ran my fingers through his hair, Amethyst began to purr a melody in my head that I instinctively began to hum out loud.

I could feel both Xander and I begin to relax, and by the time the melody was over, I felt a renewed energy flowing through me.

Kade and Matt looked over at us, shocked.

“What? What's wrong?” I asked them.

“What did you do, Alaia? When you started humming, your eyes turned purple.”

I didn’t know I was “doing” anything; I was just trying to comfort my mate.

"Umm, I'm not sure? I just followed my instincts. I just wanted to make him feel better."

I lifted Xander’s head from my chest, and sure enough, the dark circles that had been living under his eyes for days were gone. His eyes were their perfect bright crystal blue, and he looked well-rested and energized.

“Well, that was unexpected,” he said to me with a smile.

“You’re telling me?! I don’t know what happened. Amethyst began to purr in my mind, and something told me to hum along with her. Crazy stuff...”

“So, can we get one of those purring ‘head hug’ things too?” Kade joked, pointing to Matt and himself.

Xander growled and clenched my waist tighter, pulling me closer to him.

“Mine!”

“Calm down Xander; I’m sure I can help them out too, with a lot less cuddling involved.”

I wiggled from his grasp then walked behind the loveseat the boys were sitting on and placed a hand on their shoulders.

Again, Amethyst purred the melody, and I hummed it out loud.

This time it was Xander’s turn to watch in awe.

When I finished, I bent over and looked at the guy's faces. Both looked like they’d just woke from a twelve-hour nap.

“Well, my work here is done, fellas. Now that you’re all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, I’m hoping you can figure out this rogue issue. I’m going to go lay down for a bit, that took a lot out of me.”

Xander crossed the room and gave me a quick kiss on the lips.

“Thank you for this, Little One.”

“No need to thank me, Xander, I’m just happy to see my boys looking and feeling better. I’m here anytime you need me.”

As I closed the door, I heard Kade say, “Bean is fucking awesome, man!”

Really? Not him too...

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Walking to the room, I heard Amethyst again.

How are you feeling, Doll?

Amethyst! I feel great, I little tired but still. That was amazing; I didn’t know we could do that.

There are a lot of awesome things we can do that you don’t know about yet.

This is true, so we're like nap faeries now?

No, we're healers. Since they didn't have any physical injuries, we just gave them a supercharge of energy that will last about forty-eight hours.

Nice! So, what else can we do?

You'll find out when the time is right, Sweetie

I guess that's acceptable. You're alright with me, Amethyst.

Ha! Glad to hear it, Babe.

I made it back to my room, curled up in the middle of the bed, and shut my eyes.

Before I drifted off, the realization that I could heal people hit me hard.

I was really and truly a special wolf, and I had been blessed with an incredible gift. I wasn't going to waste it. I was going to do all that I could to learn about my powers and figure out how I could best serve the people I loved.

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I woke about an hour later to the feeling of the bed dipping beside me. I glanced over and saw a smiling Xander looking at me.

"Hello handsome, are you here for a nap too?"

"Not at all, Little One. I can't remember the last time I had this much energy. Whatever you did for us back in my office has still got us wired."

"Amethyst says we're healers. Since you guys weren't physically injured and just drained, we gave you a super energy boost. You should be back to normal in a couple of days."

Xander nodded at this before a sly smile crossed his face.

"I know what I can do with some of this extra energy. I just realized something, Little One. You were promised a punishment a few days ago, but all this nonsense with the rogues distracted me."

I was shocked. I'd just helped his ass out, and he was thinking about punishing me? I mean, yeah, his punishments were terrific, but I wasn't going to tell him that!

"Don't look at me like that, baby. I wouldn't dream of punishing you tonight, not after what you just did. So, it'll be a reward instead."

“I’m listening.”

He had my attention big time, and I couldn’t wait to hear what he had in mind.

He stood up and began to slowly remove his clothes. As they dropped away, my mouth became drier and drier.

Once he was completely naked, I raked my eyes over his perfect form from head to toe.

This man was yummy, and I wanted to climb him like a tree, licking every inch of skin on my way to the top.

Xander then walked over to his side of the bed and opened his nightstand drawer.

He pulled out two pairs of handcuffs and two silk scarves.

“Strip, now!”

Yes sir! Amethyst purred in my head.

Oh, don’t be a pervert!

Look who’s talking. I’m not the one about to get nasty with the big sexy alpha over there.

Then I had an idea.

“Xander, would Alastair like to come out and play?” I asked while slowly undressing.

He released a deep and sexy growl before his eyes flashed to the dark pools of ebony that meant Alastair was on the surface.

“Alastair, would you like to meet Amethyst?”

“My mate! Yes, I want to meet my mate.”

“Good. Give me back Xander for a moment, and I’ll be right back with you. I promise.”

Xander’s eyes flashed back icy blue before he asked, “Alaia, do you know what you’re doing?”

“Not really, no. But I do know that our wolves deserve to spend some time together. They are mates as well.”

“This wasn’t at all what I had in mind when I came to the room. I was supposed to be taking advantage of you and putting a pup in you if there isn’t one there already. Now Alastair is getting some action?”

“Gotta roll with the punches, Daddy. Now I want that sexy ass of yours to throw on a robe and meet me down in the back yard. We’ll shift and let the lovebirds have a little fun.”

“Ugh, Alastair is such a cock block...” Xander mumbled while heading into his closet for the robe.

I put on my robe as well before heading down the stairs and out the doors.

It was a beautiful night; the perfectly clear sky was filled with stars.

Well, isn’t this romantic?

Thank you for this, Alaia. I’ve been craving Alastair, and I know he’s been feeling the same for me.

You guys deserve this time just as much and Xander and I. You need to connect with him, and I’m more than happy to take a backseat and let you take the wheel tonight.

All too often, our needs aren’t made a priority. You doing this for Alastair and I will strengthen the bond between all four of us.

Well then, it’s a win-win situation. Have fun tonight, Amethyst; it’s your time now.

Oh, I plan to; lots and lots and lots of fun. Maybe we’ll even try-

Okay! I get it, no need for details.

I took off my robe and easily shifted into Amethyst’s large fluffy form.

We were a stunningly beautiful wolf with the contrast of creamy brown fur and purple eyes. Alastair was going to lose it when he saw us.

He walked up from behind and rubbed his face against ours. Even in wolf form, he towered over us and had to bend down a bit to get to our level.

I sat back in my mind and watched as Amethyst and Alastair sniffed and licked one another before they closed their eyes and touched their muzzles together, happy to finally be together.

After a few moments, they opened their eyes and took off into the woods to do whatever it is that mates on their first date do.

I might just end up with that bun in the oven after all.