

Chapter 6 - Closure

Alpha Stone

I hear voices dri ing around me, too weak and too tired to open my eyes. I am just comfortable and warm. I never get to sleep in and it feels so good. I just wish the buzzing in my head would stop. I sink back into unconsciousness.

Sometime later I feel a tug. An anchor pulling me back to life. That persistent buzzing in my ears is driving me crazy. I hear disappointed voices around me. "Alpha Stone. Can you hear me?" The voice rises above the cacophony in my mind. Slowly blinking, I open my eyes and make out silhouettes in the dim room. "Ah, there you are, Alpha. Welcome back." Greets a melodic voice.

I attempt to focus on the source of the voice and see a female in a white coat. A doctor. "I'm in the hospital?" I croak.

"Your deductive reasoning is working fine." She smiles. "You are." She li s a cup of water to my mouth. I greedily drink the tepid water through the straw. "Slow down, Alpha. I don't want your progress halting due to vomiting. You have a very bad concussion and have been in a coma for three days."

As though in slow motion, I raise my hand to my forehead and feel the bandage wrapped there. "So that explains the buzzing."

"You have a buzzing in your head?" She grasps my eyelid and flashes a penlight in each eye. "Hmmm. I think you will be okay. Hopefully, your wolf healing will kick in soon and you'll be good as new." Standing up and putting the light in her pocket. "We did an MRI and there doesn't appear to be any residual damage. Give it a few days and you should be released. Sooner, if your wolf healing kicks in. So give your wolf some encouragement."

I try to focus on the doc's face. Blinking, it comes into focus. "Dr. Skye?" She nods. "How's Paisley?"

"She's great. All healed, except for a slight limp. Hopefully, that will get better with physical therapy. She was sent home this morning." She adds. "I think she said she had some clean up and closure to take care of. She'll be fine, she is a strong woman. And, I have found that when someone goes through CMS, it makes them even more resilient."

"Good. Paisley is one of the best people I know." I realize I have overextended myself and I settle back on the pillow. It is only a few seconds before I dri back into the nothingness that is sleep.

Paisley

Enf. North and I just arrived back at the pack house. North gave me the option of packing my own bags and clearing out of the Beta Suite and moving to another suite or a cabin on my own. I decided that I wanted to move to a cabin on my own. They assigned me one that is close to the school, so it is still near the pack house, but I will have more privacy and will be able to avoid Miles. All my belongings has been moved to my cabin for me, so I don't have to go to the pack house. But I have one thing to take care of before I settle in, I have to reject Miles so I can get closure.

North and I exit the car. He comes to my side and supports me as I weakly limp to the pack house. The drive has worn me out, but I have to get this over with, so my wolf and I can finally rest. As we walk in, North hugs me to his side so my limp is less noticeable. I appreciate the support because even medicated with Amra, I can feel the pull of the mate bond and I know Miles is inside. He looks up at me in North's clutches and actually had the nerve to growl. He stomps over to us and I held my hand up. "Stop!" I warn. The entire room goes still. "Take the aggression down a notch. You have no rights!"

"Where have you been?" He looks at me and North angrily. "No one would tell me where you were."

"We need to talk."

"Yes, we do." He agrees. "Let's go up to my o ice."

He goes to take me by the hand, but I shake it o . I glance at North. "Will you accompany us?"

"What?" Miles eyes us again.

"North is going with us." I growl.

"Fine." He storms up to the third floor to the Beta o ice.

When we enter, there is another wolf behind the desk, working on the computer. He sees me and stands. He is really the most handsome wolf I have ever seen. Long brown hair and crystal green eyes, tall and muscular. If I was guessing, I'd say early thirties. No mate mark and no wedding ring. Yum! I purse my lips. Wow, this medicine really works, I normally couldn't look at another wolf, let alone drool at one.

Miles startles. "I forgot you were working in here. Uh. Let me introduce you to my mate, Paisley." He says. "Paisley, this is Beta Knight."

"Nice to meet you, Paisley." He encloses my hand in his and smiles.

I return the smile. "You as well, Beta Knight." I look at Miles curiously. I wonder why we have another Beta?

"I'll leave you too alone." Beta Knight o ers.

For some odd reason, I don't want Beta Knight to leave. "Just a moment, Beta Knight, please?" He nods.

"Miles," I begin. "Have you ever heard of CMS?"

"No." He hesitates. I nod.

"Okay, give me a minute." I focus back on Beta Knight. "Where are you from?"

"Stone Mountain City." He replies, glancing between Miles and I. "Alpha Commander sent me here. I was one of his Betas. As you can imagine, it takes a lot to run the city."

"Oh, yes. I imagine it does. Do you know about CMS?"

"Yes. I worked closely with Dr. Skye to relocate some of the victims." He eyes me warily.

"Do you have a mate?" I ask. "I apologize for quizzing you so much, but I do have a reason, if you will humor me a moment."

"No problem." He chuckles. "I met my mate about a year ago. She kind of strung me along for several months and then ghosted me. I don't know where she is now and I have since rejected her. But the short answer is no, I do not have a mate."

I look to North. Can you and Beta Knight please wait outside the door? Once Miles and I have a private conversation, I need you two to assist me in explaining CMS to him.

"Oh. Okay." North agrees as he and Beta Knight go to wait outside the door.

Once the room is empty, I sit down behind the desk and motion for Miles to sit in one of the side chairs. He does. "Explain." I simply say.

He looks uncomfortable and squirms a bit. "What do you want me to say?"

"Listen, don't play dumb. Tell me what is in your heart and mind. Spill."

He at least has the decency to look ashamed. "Paisley, to be truthful with you, I am confused."

"Go on." I prod

"You know of my history with Marissa and that we had been together for ten years."

"On and o. You were together in that time frame when she was around."

He nods. "Anyway, she showed up at my bachelor party, and I was intoxicated. She said she wanted to talk to get closure."

"So a year of being gone was not enough closure for her?"

"I guess it was a game she played."

"Was? Are you sure you are using the correct verb here? Wouldn't 'is' be a more apt verb?" It is a game she plays!"

"As I was saying, she said she wasn't leaving again. And, I just got caught up in my feelings. I am sorry if I have hurt you. But like I said, I am confused. She wants to be a couple again. There is a part of me that she owns. On the other hand, I love you, Paisley, you are my mate. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I just don't know how to reconcile this. I need time to work through this and decide what I want. I feel I need space, but then I don't want to be away from you. Does that make sense?"

"Yes, it does. You are selfish." I condemned. "You want your cake and eat it too." That saying never made sense to me. Of course you want to eat your cake! "You want me and you want her."

"I just need to think."

"Well, the best part of it all is that you don't need to think about it. I understand. No confusion. I want to make this easy on you." I flash him my most charming smile.

A look of relief passes over his face.

"So, just sit right there and let's give you an education in CMS. Beta Knight? North?" I call out and they immediately file into the o ice.

"Miles," I begin. "There is a condition called Cheating Mate Syndrome or CMS." His mouth falls open. "When mates find each other, their biologies sync. Especially if they are intimate. The other night at my bachelor party, I began exhibiting symptoms of this." I pull the brochure about CMS out of my pocket and pass it to him. "Nausea, vomiting, excruciating pain are the first symptoms to present. I felt like someone was stabbing me with a white hot poker, repeatedly. If you look there, the pain increases as your mate's tryst continues and the pain lasts as long as the act does."

I stand and walk to the front of the desk. Miles's face is pale, he looks like he is going to be sick. I kick the trash can over in front of him. "Just in case you need it. I vomited repeatedly for a couple of hours until I finally slipped into a coma due to the severity of my injuries." I grin. "Oh, I forgot to tell you about my injuries. Since you and Marissa decided to have multiple hook-ups that night, so to speak, my condition worsened. North, don't you have some photos you took for my medical file."

"I have access to that file, just a moment." He glares at Miles.

While he is logging in on his phone, I continue. "First, I developed black bruises, like someone was punching me repeatedly. Oh! And the burning like fire was excruciating." I squeeze my eyes tightly and lean my head back, remembering the pain. "But a er the repeated acts, my bruises began to turn into weeping sores and then bleeding wounds."

"Here they are!" North holds his phone out to Miles, who sees the photo and immediately pushes the phone away and vomits in the garbage can. I turn my face away. I have seen enough of my own vomit that it turns my stomach. I clutch my mouth and my eyes water.

A er Miles retching ceases, North pushes the phone in his face again. "Look at the photos, Miles. You owe her that!" Miles looks at me and takes the phone, wiping his mouth with his other sleeve. He winces as he looks at each photo.

North gets up in his face. "We had to give her every ounce of blood we had on the chopper and she still barely made it to the ER alive. She coded during surgery, but thank the goddess that we have an expert surgeon who deals with CMS and she was able to pull her through. I hope a night of passion with Marissa was worth what Paisley went through. Next time you are faced with choosing your mate or Marissa, for goddess sakes, reject your mate first!"

Miles hands the phone back to North and his eyes are red, but he says nothing. Seething, North punches his right in the nose. Miles flies out of the chair and hits the back wall, blood gushing from his face. He says nothing, but tears are fully coursing down his cheeks.

I sigh. Watching this play out has lost its appeal. Miles might be a cheater, but I am not a sadist. "North, stop." I insist. North growls, pacing and pulls at his hair. "Go, North. Get us some cold bottled water, please." North nods and leaves.

Knight looks at me as though he is shell shocked.

Miles leans up against the wall, resting his head and holding his nose.

"Miles, I wanted to demonstrate what it feels like to be on the receiving end of the pain." I walk over to Knight. "May I?" His eyes widen as he looks over to Miles. "Two things I say. 1) He deserves it. 2) I think North is halfway in love with me and I don't want to encourage it." He nods.

I wrap my arms around Knight's neck and press my lips to his. He groans and pulls me closer. I push him back against the door frame and press against him. I want Miles to get as much of a lesson as I can give, with clothes on. I lick Knight's lip as he opens his mouth. Licking, biting and sucking his tongue sends a fire through my veins to the point I don't even hear the screaming that is coming from Miles. I pull back and stare into Knight's beautiful crystal green eyes and take a deep breath. Knight is visibly a ected and breathing as hard as I am.

I turn to Miles and he is lying on the floor thrashing, vomit spewing from his mouth. As the kiss subsides, Miles stills on the floor, breathing heavily. I help him into the chair as Knight leaves to find a few wet towels.

"Miles, can you imagine what I su ered through while you and Marissa spent the night together if a kiss can cause that much agony.

His eyes are shining with misery as he looks at me. "Paisley, I am so sorry. I would never have knowingly done that to you. I do love you. I am so confused, but I would have rather died than make you su er that. I am so sorry."

My heart aches as I look at the wolf I have loved for the past year. My soulmate. The wolf I was going to spend the rest of my life with. All the faith and trust I had in him is in ashes. Every time I trust a male, they wound me. My dad hurt me by leaving my mom and me when I was a child. I never saw him again. You just can't trust males.

"I am glad to hear that, Miles. I don't even wish this su ering on you. I don't want to torture you any longer. I just want you to be aware of the consequences of your actions. Once you bond, even a partial bond, like we have, it needs to be respected and cherished. We were going to be bonded for eternity the next day and I know you didn't even think twice about me."

"I did think about you, Paisley." He gasps.

"Shhhhh." I held my finger to my lips. "I don't want to know how pitifully little you thought about me. Besides, it obviously wasn't enough to stop you. If you ever find another mate, don't put her through this, okay?"

"What do you mean, another mate?" Recognition dawns. "No, please, Paisley. I thought you understood? Just please give me a little time to work through this. Please wait for me."

"Shhhhh, Miles. I waited a year and this is the thanks I got." I sobbed.

Taking a deep breath, I composed myself for the final nail. "I, Paisley Woods, reject you, Miles Reid, as my mate, for now and forever."

Miles seems to deflate as he gasps. "No!" Again, he is writhing and shaking, sobbing and gasping.

Knight walks in as I turn around. I feel a pull to him and I can see he feels it too. He and I are frozen in time and there is a tethering between us. I am too mentally exhausted to deal with anything more right now. "Knight, please help Miles get cleaned up and make sure he doesn't need medical care. I would appreciate it." I race out of the room and nearly knock North back down the steps.

He drops the bottled waters he is carrying and clutches my arms to keep me from falling. He li s his hands to my face and wipes the tears with his thumbs. "You okay, Paisley?"

"I will be." My breath hitches as I struggle to breathe normally. "I just need to shower and sleep." He nods as he releases me. "Please help Knight deal with Miles. I le him in a bad way. Thanks, North."

"Sure, Paisley."

I limp down the stairs and out the door. Everyone in the living room, thankfully, just watches me go and doesn't make a move to stop me.