

CHAPTER 8-1

I stood in front of the house, staring at it for a moment. I knew I was acting recklessly just by being there, glancing around nervously to make sure no one was watching.

Finally, I gathered my courage and walked up the pathway, knocking on the front door.

When it swung open, Angel looked surprised to see me.

"Madison, is everything okay?" he asked, concern etched on his face.

"Are you alone?" I quickly inquired.

"Yeah, come on in," he responded. I stepped inside and cast a brief look around the room.

Angel closed the door behind me, and I turned to face him again. It was clear I had something heavy on my mind.

"Alpha Axel's here," I finally said.

"Alpha Axel? THE Alpha Axel? The ruler of death?" he asked, his eyes wide with shock.

"That's right. He's taken control of my home pack and is here with my mother," I explained.

"Why?" Angel asked, his brow furrowing in confusion.

"They initially came looking for Atticus, but after seeing the house and how Peter and Martha have been treating me—especially with those locks on the kitchen cabinets—Axel insisted that I go back with them," I explained.

"He's actually forcing you to go back?" Angel asked, his eyes wide with surprise. "Wait a second. There are locks on the kitchen cabinets?" The realization dawned on him.

"I've always told you that I needed to take care of myself," I replied.

"Yeah, but I didn't realize it was this serious," he said.

"Well, it is. Look, I can't stay long. They've probably figured out that I jumped out of the window and are likely following my scent here. I know Axel will," I said.

"Can't Alpha Gideon do anything about this?" he asked, concern creeping into his voice.

"No. I was never officially part of this pack; I was just staying here. Even though Alpha Gideon treated me like family, now that Axel is exerting control over who I belong to, there's nothing he can do," I explained.

"This is absurd. That guy is insane," Angel said.

"I know. But he's made it clear: I'm not staying here. I'm really going to miss you," I admitted.

"I'm going to miss you too. So, you actually jumped out of the window?" he asked, incredulity in his voice.

"Yeah. While Axel was waiting for me to pack, he was out front. He's going to be furious," I said.

"Yeah, he could seriously hurt you," he warned.

"He won't kill me. If that were his plan, he wouldn't be so determined to make me come back with him," I said.

"How can you be so sure?" he pressed.

"I don't really know. It's just a feeling I have. You need to trust me on this," I replied.

"I'm going to speak with Alpha Gideon to see if he can help me get you back here before you're gone too long," he said.

"Angel, please don't. I can't risk them finding out about us. No one knows, and it's crucial that it stays that way; otherwise, you'll be the one in serious trouble," I replied.

"I don't care about that," he insisted.

"Well, I do. Besides, Alpha Gideon can't override Axel when it comes to his pack, and you know that," I pointed out.

"What if..." Angel began, but I quickly took his hands in mine.

"Stop. You know there's nothing we can do. I just came to say goodbye," I said firmly.

"Are you really leaving?" he asked.

"Yeah. But you're going to be okay. I'll be fine too. I still have my phone, so just call or text me if you start to worry. I'll be with my mother," I reassured him.

"You've missed her," he said softly.

"I have," I replied.



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