

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 3

“I always have a choice.”

The words sound strong, but in truth, it’s hard to breathe. Hard to think. His scent lingers around me, wrapping me in invisible chains, suffocating me.

Travis. Travis. Of all people.

My mate.

I want to scream. I want to claw at my own skin and rip the bond away as I meet his stunned gaze, watching as he blinks rapidly, his lips slightly parted, as if struggling to process my words.

“What do you mean by that statement?” His voice lacks its usual cocky edge. It’s uneven. Almost... unsure.

A cruel smirk tugs at my lips despite the horror twisting in my stomach. “It’s exactly what you think,” I say, waiting for the realisation to sink in.

His jaw clenches. His fists curl at his sides. A flash of something—fear—flickers in his blue eyes before he masks it with fury.

“You wouldn’t dare reject me, Kali,” he snarls, his body radiating dominance. “You wouldn’t dare reject your mate. Do you have any idea how many women in this pack would kill to be in your position? To be my Luna?”

His arrogance snaps something inside me.

Lucky? LUCKY?

I let out a sharp, humorless laugh. “Oh, Travis,” I say, shaking my head. “Do I look like any of those women to you?”

His nostrils flare, and I know he doesn’t like my tone. But I don’t care. Because I refuse to submit.

“Kali, I am your mate, and—”

“I, Kali, reject you, Alpha Travis, future Alpha of the Red Night Pack, as my mate and Alpha.” His eyes widen in horror, but I don’t stop. “I refuse to submit to you—now and forever.”

The moment the last word leaves my lips, it happens.

Pain.

Blinding, suffocating, unbearable pain.

A strangled cry rips from my throat as my knees buckle. My entire body seizes up, like my bones are shattering from the inside out. I clutch my chest, gasping, drowning in agony. It's unlike anything I've ever felt before, worse than any beating, worse than any punishment I've endured.

Across from me, Travis collapses to the floor, his hands clawing at his chest, his face contorted in agony. His breath comes out in ragged, broken gasps, his entire body trembling as if he's fighting something he can't control.

I force my gaze up, my vision blurred with unshed tears. And that's when I see it—his eyes, glowing a deep, dangerous shade of gold.

His wolf is taking over.

His body convulses, his growls turning guttural, inhuman. He's losing control, and my stomach drops because I know what this means. If he doesn't accept the rejection, the pain will never stop.

"Travis," I gasp, my voice hoarse. "Accept it."

His head snaps up, his breathing ragged, his pupils dilated.

"I will never accept this," he snarls. His voice is deeper, rougher, his wolf barely restrained.

I scream as another wave of pain crashes over me, my body curling into itself. "You have to," I choke out. "Or we'll both die from this. You know I have nothing to lose if I die. Unlike you."

For a moment, he hesitates, his entire body shaking, his wolf fighting against him. But then, after what feels like an eternity, his lips curl back in a snarl.

"I, Alpha Travis, future Alpha of the Red Night Pack, accept your rejection," he spits in fury. "And I reject you, Kali, as my mate and Luna."

The pain lessens instantly, like a crushing weight lifting off my chest. I gasp for air, my body still trembling, my limbs weak. But I can breathe.

Slowly, I push myself up, my limbs weak and sore.

Travis remains on the ground, panting heavily. But when he finally lifts his head, his expression is deadly.

"You'll regret this," he growls, his voice low, dangerous. "Do you have any idea what you just did?"

I meet his glare, my lips curling into a bitter smirk. "Yeah," I say, brushing the dust off my clothes. "I just saved myself from a lifetime of hell."

His eyes darken, his entire body vibrating with suppressed fury as he pulls himself up. "You'll pay for this, Kali. You don't get to humiliate me and walk away." He spits.

I roll my eyes, unimpressed. "Oh, Travis, I know your ego is bruised, but don't worry." I lean in slightly, lowering my voice mockingly. "I won't tell the rest of the pack that I rejected you. You can

still pick one of your little playthings and pretend she's your mate. Grace, maybe? I bet she'd be thrilled."

His nostrils flare, but before he can respond, I turn on my heel and walk away. Thankfully, he doesn't stop me.

The moment I step outside, the cold night air hits me, and I inhale deeply, trying to steady my pounding heart. My body still aches, and a hollow, empty feeling settles in my chest.

My wolf is silent.

And despite everything—despite knowing I made the right choice—a part of me feels like I just shattered something inside myself that will never be whole again.

The walk home feels exhausting as my body still aches from the rejection. I just want to crawl into bed, close my eyes, and pretend tonight never happened.

As I reach the door, I move as quietly as possible, praying everyone is asleep. But the moment I push it open—

“Surprise!”

I nearly jump out of my skin.

My mother and Caspian stand in the middle of the room, holding a small cake with a single candle burning on top. My mother's face is bright with excitement, while Caspian...

My stomach twists.

He's smiling, but it doesn't quite reach his eyes.

I freeze in the doorway, my breath caught in my throat. I wasn't expecting this. I wasn't expecting him to be here or see him so soon.

“Mom... Caspian...” I struggle to find my voice.

“You were gone all day, and I wanted to do something special for you,” my mother says warmly, stepping closer. “The Beta is at a meeting at the packhouse and will be staying there tonight, so I thought—why not invite your best friend?” She gestures to Caspian. “He came as soon as I called despite him being on night duty. He's such a good friend.”

My heart clenches at her words.

I look at Caspian, really look at him, and in that moment, I see it. The flicker of sadness in his deep brown eyes, the slight downward twitch of his lips. His jaw is tight like he's holding something back, and then—

A whisper.

Soft, barely audible.

“We’re not mates.”

His voice is laced with quiet devastation, and for a split second, I swear I see his eyes glisten.

Pain stabs my heart.

Of course we’re not mates—I’ve already met mine. The Moon Goddess has a twisted sense of humour.

She gave me Travis instead of Caspian.

I swallow the lump in my throat and turn to my mother, who is still watching me with hopeful eyes. “Can you leave us alone, please?”

Surprise flickers across her face, but she nods, setting the cake down on the table. “Of course, sweetheart.” She gives Caspian a small, grateful smile before leaving the room.

The silence between us stretches, suffocating me.

I take a shaky breath before stepping toward Caspian and wrapping my arms around him, clinging to him like I’m afraid I’ll fall apart if I let go.

“I found my mate,” I whisper against his shoulder. “I was eating in the cafeteria, and it just... happened.”

Caspian’s entire body goes still.

I feel his breath hitch, feel his hands tighten slightly around my waist before he slowly pulls back to look at me. His eyes darken with something unreadable, something broken.

“Who?” he asks, voice barely above a whisper.

I force out a bitter laugh. “Travis.”

His jaw clenches, and something flashes in his eyes—anger? Pain? Maybe both.

I shake my head quickly, needing to explain before he gets the wrong idea. “But I rejected him immediately,” I say firmly. “I’d rather die than be bound to him.”

A flicker of relief crosses his face, but it’s gone just as quickly, replaced by that same quiet sadness.

“I always thought...” My voice falters, and I exhale shakily. “I always thought it would be you.”

Caspian swallows hard, his gaze never leaving mine.

"So did I," he admits, voice rough with emotion. "You were the only one I ever wanted, Kali."

I bite my lip, feeling my chest tighten painfully. "But now that it's not happening... maybe it's best we go our separate ways." I force the words out, even though they taste like poison. "By today, someone else will turn eighteen, and you'll find your mate."

A humourless chuckle escapes him, but there's no amusement in his eyes. "You're right," he murmurs. "I have to forget you. Forget my feelings. My mate deserves better than a man who's in love with someone else."

My heart lurches at his words, at the quiet pain in his tone.

A sad smile tugs at my lips. "Any woman would be lucky to have you, Caspian." I swallow hard. "But I guess the Moon Goddess didn't think I was worthy."

His expression hardens. "Don't say that." He reaches out, hesitating for a moment before cupping my cheek gently. "You are more than worthy, Kali. Even if we're not mates... you'll always be my first love." His thumb brushes against my cheek. "The woman I loved not because of the mate bond—but because it was you."

Something inside me cracks, but I don't say anything. I can't.

Caspian exhales shakily before pulling me into a final embrace. This time, his arms hold me like he's memorising the feel of me, like he's saying goodbye without actually saying the words.

And I don't stop him because I know this is the last time.