

The Pack Rule Number 1 No Mates

- Billionaire One 150

[1,732 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty

FELIX

A rush of blood pounds between my ears as this woman's words replay h my head.

"My name is Angela Riotre, mul I was

hoping to find my husband."

Oh my God. Why is she here? What does she want? Where is RAINIER!

"Your husband?" I question, keeping close to door as I watch her and inwardly kicking myself for pretending not to know exactly who she

"Yes," she replies. "Sheriff Rainier Rlotte," she says slyly, as if she believes she's dropping the bomb on me.

I don't know how it is I'm able to smile as cattily as I do, but I manage. As you can see. he's not here

Her eyes narrow and she spins slowly, surveying the room before her eyes catch on the discarded navy blue shirt I dropped on the couch. Her shoulder tense and I ready myself, thinking that she's going to reach for it and knowing for that I won't let her take it

from me. The odd sense of possession that comes over me in that moment is startling. She is his wife. He fucking married her. I know all this, but for some reason there's still a current of crazy suddenly flowing through my veins that is screaming at her for trying to claim him. She

doesn't pick it up. Instead, she turns to face me, walking around the couch to come up on my other side. She's pretty, but not gorgeous... and Rainier... is better than gorgeous. Not that it should matter what she looks like in comparison to me, but I'd be lying if I said that it didn't. Right at this moment, I'm sending the good lord a quick prayer of thanks for the tits and ass that he blessed me. He may not have given me good parents or an easy life, but he took his sweet time in crafting this bitch and that's a fact. I may not have the ring yet, but I won this round.

Yet Felix? Seriously?

"Yes, I can see that he's not here. That much is obvious. But you do know him, don't you?" she says quietly, her voice edged with malice.

I flatten my gaze into one of boredom and simply stare back into her eyes. Not wanting to lie, but not wanting to give her any more than she's already gotten by coming here.

She nods, taking my pointed silence as a yes to her question. Shaking her head arrogantly, she eyes me, a sinister smile playing along her lips. "You have no idea what you're getting into. No idea what kind of monster you've just welcomed between your legs."

"Excuse me?" I snap. "You don't know a damn thing about me. If you did you'd know that I quite like having a monster between my legs. In fact, I prefer it. I guess I should be grateful that the woman didn't come here crying alligator tears and toting a box of tissues. Because if she had, I would most likely be in Hector's car right now racing down the highway. But it's obvious that this woman came here for some reason other than appealing to my softer side. She didn't come here to try and make me feel sorry for her.

Or to plead her case as his loving wife. She came here to check out the competition and to try and scare me away.

Suddenly.

I wonder if he told her about me....or if she simply followed him here this afternoon and found out. I'd give my left eye to find out which one it was. Because if he told her... that would mean something. It wouldn't cancel out what he's already omitted, but it might make me a little more inclined to stick around.

If he didn't tell her... and she simply put two and two together - I would need to leave tonight. And soon.

She studies me crudely, her critical eyes glaring first at my bustline, then at my hip. Her lips pinch as she curses behind her teeth, but it's not until she raises her eyes to my neck that the first traces of red bloom across her pale cheeks.

"My oh my, you two have been busy,"

she says

mrukily.

I can see her working to control her anger. Her eyes begin to bulge a bit her nostrils flaring with each noisy breath. The muscles of her

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Chapter One Hundred Fifty

steps a few foot closer to me, pretending not to search the right side of my neck. Then her gaze freezes and her entire face tiems practically purple with anger..

I decide I've had enough of this weird little visit.

I clear my throat, reaching inside of myself for the girl I've always been. The one that may not be much against a network of soulless gang bangers, but could definitely handle a dumb bitch or two. 'If you don't mind, I was looking forward to a quiet night alone." I pull the door open a touch more in gesture for her to leave,

She ignores me. Her wild eyes seemingly glued to that spot on my neck, "Alone. Ha!" she snaps, still not meeting my gaze. "Were you alone last night too? Or was that when that bastard bit you?"

DRAVEN

When we roll up to the bar my eyes are sore from crying, but there's a strange calm that has settled over me and ironically, I know the person responsible for it is the same one responsible for my tear stained cheeks. The reality that my father is actually here... in the same town as I am, still hasn't entirely sunk in. He wants to meet Dominic. He actually apologized for ambushing me on purpose when he knew Dominic was gone. I'm the daughter of a fucking werewolf!!!

"The world is suddenly a very strange place," I comment as he parks the Hummer between some Cadillac and a black Beamer. "Weird," I say as we climb out of the car. "Hart didn't say anything about anyone else being here."

Tandora's eyes suddenly flash from hazel to gold then back again. "Someone is up there with her," she hisses and my eyes instinctively shoot to the window of my one-night apartment.

I strain my ears, attempting to hear anything beyond the brick walls of the building, but I can't and the fact is more than a little annoying given the fact that I've just found out that I have Shifter blood.

Without really knowing why we do it, we enter the back of the bar soundlessly. It's unlocked, just as Bart promised it would be and I wonder if this visitor entered the same way we did or if Felix let them in another way. The only reason Bart was okay with leaving it unlocked is because of the new camera system the guys had installed. That, and we were supposed to be here right after sundown. Unfortunately, that's not how things played out and now there might be someone dangerous inside.

Rainier told me a little about the world Felix was part of. The people she was tied to. The person upstairs could be one of them.

We creep up

the stairs slowly, not making even the slightest noise as we step. I can see Felix just beyond the open doorway, she appears healthy enough, but mildly irritated as she holds the door open with her fingers white knuckled over the handle.

A woman's voice carries out just as we reach the landing. "Were you alone last night too? Or was that when that bastard bit you?"

"Ohhhh shit," Tadora hisses under her

her breath as the pair of us saunter into sight.

"Hi!" I say brightly.

Felix's head jerks in my direction, surprise and apprehension warping her normally friendly face. "Of course," she says dejectedly, as Taedora and I step cautiously into the room.

"Of course, what?" I inquire softly, studying the sudden tension in her muscles and the look of absolute betrayal on her face.

"You guys must be friends," she states with a frown. The turbulent turquoise of

ther

reyes shadowed with disappointment.

I grin, stepping close to her. "Well yes we are," I agree, "We're your friends," I say pointedly, and her chin juts up curiously.

"You got anything to drink in here, Goldilocks? Or should I go downstairs and raid old Barty boys' cabinets? Taedora asks, spinning graciously on one foot like a ballerina and ending with a charming smile.

Chapter One Hundred Fifty

Felix blushes and bites her lower lip as if she's still not entirely certain what

she's here to see. "He might have locked it, she says

"Nah, Tae says. "He knew we were coming. It's got to be unlocked."

I decide to address the elephant in the room and clarify once and for all who it is in that politely. "You must be Angie," I say amicably. "Nice to finally meet you.

here for. I gaze at the visitor

The woman glares at me, studying my hair and my eyes before her lips turn up in a sneer. "Who the fuck are you? Another of his whores?" she snaps.

Despite the gasp that comes from Felix, and the barely contained chortle Taedora is choking back, I ignore her remark and step forward. Angie is taller than I am by maybe a couple of inches and I'm sure she probably thinks she has the advantage, but she would be wrong. Running through the marshes while fighting panthers put a little more than a bit of cock in my doodle doo, and I will not go down easy.

"My name is Draven," I say smoothly, my eyes catching on the rings of her left finger. "I'm Domonic's fiancée." She has two rings on the same finger. One is a plain, yellow gold wedding band and seems to fit quite nicely. But the other... The other is white gold and shimmering with diamonds and emeralds the color of my eyes. That one is clearly too small for her and call it a bunch, but I'm betting I never even put it on before today.

"Domonic's fiancée? Oh! Yes! Of course! I know Domonic. He and Rainier are very close," she says happily, suddenly friendly. "I was just having a little discussion with..."

with.. um. Angie trails off, shooting a satisfied smirk Felix's way in pointed reference to the fact that she doesn't have her name.

"That's a beautiful ring you're wearing." I say suddenly, taking her cold hand in mine before she can stop me. She tenses, and as I raise my eyes to hers and see the sudden nervousness in them. Smiling again, I ask, "Where did you get it?"

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,407 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-One DELILAH

Staring at the back of my brother's head with a can of soup in my hand, ready to be thrown- I wonder, for maybe the five billionth time. how anybody could be as stupid as he is. I mean, he was born normal. At least, I think he was. Then again, I wasn't there during the hatching so there might be details of his birth that my mother chose to leave out each time she told the story. Dad's story almost matched hers too perfectly. It was probably rehearsed. There had to be an incident, or unseen variable. Maybe there was a shockwave at the very moment he was born, or maybe the nurse wrapped his body up too tightly and the blood couldn't flow properly. I'm not sure what happened, but something did! Because he is an idiot!

A bonafide moron on two legs (sometimes three).

And now... while I stare at his sandy blond head, I contemplate whether or not his being canned in the back of the head would even do any real damage. I doubt it. It'll probably just open my soup,

I sigh, putting the soup down on the raggedy wooden counter of the rickety wooden kitchen in this ruggedly decrepit cabin, and glaring out the window at the full moon in the sky.

"I can't believe you idiots dragged me out here," I complain, turning on the faucet and watching the sludge roll out of the tap. Every fucking time. It's going to take five whole minutes for that shit to clear.

Oh come on, baby," Charlie, my brother's best friend says, suddenly at my side. "You would've been lonely without me."

He sidles up to me, rubbing the front of his pants along my ass. Rolling my eyes, I whip my arm up "Don't fucking touch me, Charles."

up and kn

knuckle crack him in his forehead.

"Damn it, D! You could have broken my nose!" Charlie snaps.

"Coulda - woulda - shoulda. Come back over here and I'll try again."

"Quiet!" my brother Cane shouts

He's got his dumbass arms headset things on his wide melon head and is pointing some weird little microphone out toward the woods. When his feet start bouncing I know it's about to get real and I clench my teeth in anger as he and Charlie start suiting up to head out. "We got one! Cane cries out, tossing his headset and snatching up his rifle and night goggles.

"Yes!" Charlie squeals like the bitch he is, before grabbing his hunting knife and tranq gun.

Cane turns to

to me right before they go outside and says, "Stay here, D.

"Well duh Captain America," I snap, watching them go. One of these d

days those two are either going to get killed or sent to prison

I'm fine with hunting if you you live out in the wilderness and you need food. But poaching is just plain wrong. And that is absolutely all those two do, I don't completely blame my simple-minded older brother. It's not like he dreamed of killing animals from the time he was small. My dad is the one who got him into it. They went on their first excursion together when Cane was ten and I was five. I still remember what it felt like

when they came home with two dead wolves hidden in the bed of my dad's truck. I cried for a damn week. Wolves are so beautiful and so... fierce! Why does anyone feel the need to turn one of the Earth's most cunning predators into a trophy?

It disgusts me. They disgust me. The only reason why I come with them when they do this is to make sure someone is there for that eventual time that the shit hits the fan. In the old days, it would've been my dad, but he died last year. He was a member of some elite potching society called The Elder Few and Cane was supposed to join in, but my dad died before he could nominate him- thank God!

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Chapter One Hundred Fifty One

As I turn back to my soup and grab a pot out of the nighnend, a loud stepping noise sounds just outside the kitchen window, followed by the yelp of what I know has to

"City God," hist. "They out fuking trap around the house toor

SATA wild thrashing wands on the other side of the wall and I know its the animal trying to get free. I should help it it's the least I can

traps are harder than bell to release when there's an animal caught in one. I'll have to get really close.

"Fuck!" I short, before grabbing her and a flashlight

I have to do this. I have to. For my peace of mind.

switch on the ashlight just as a gut wrenching boood sounds on the right side of the cabin and jump. Oh no! Its a wolf! They've caught

Shift Pacing around the

cabin, I swing

light back and forth near the brush. At first I don't see anything, just bushes and

trees, but then... the flashlight glints off tw medallions of guld sparkling in the dark and I freeze

That is the biggest fucking wolf fve ever seen.

But hory is he beautiful.

I approach slowly, holding the hammer in the air like a flag of truce as I shine the flashlight steadily on the wolf's beautifully sleek gray-gn coat. He's growling and whining at the same time, and when my light catches on his fangs for a moment I almost stop dead. They are longer and sharper than any teeth I've ever seen, and my dad caught a lot of wolves over the years. But not one like this. Beautiful and damn near as big as a horse. God, if the one that Cone went after is as big as this one is, he's in trouble.

"Hey there," I call when I'm about seven feet from him.

He's thrashing still, seemingly ignoring me. I think if I can get close enough while he's doing that, then I can release the trap without having to worry about being torn to ribbons. So I take a deep breath and step closer and closer. One little tiny foot at a time until I'm four feet from him and I can see where the wolf's entire front paw is caught in the wide-tooth bear trap Cone must have set up yesterday.

"Oh no!" I whimper when I see all the blood on the ground and around the trap. But then I notice something... the peg that releases the trap is nearly out. But... how? What?

A deep growl catches my attention and my head jerks up to meet the most mesmerizing eyes I have ever seen. They're full on yellow. Gorgeous and glowing and I gasp in admiration, forgetting for a moment that this beautiful beast is growling at me.

"We're so pretty," I say softly, noting the drool that's dripping from his angry mouth. "I want to get you out. Okay? I'm going to try to help you. But if you bite me? If you take off an arm, or a leg? I won't be able to. Got it?"

He snarls, snapping his jaws at me and for the first time I know how truly stupid of a move this was. But... I'm already here two feet from the damn trap. I take a deep breath, noting the wolf changing position as he prepares to strike, but praying that there is a God and he loves creatures too. All creatures... even my dumb ass.

The wolf moves his head closer, growling

and snarling as the pair of us urge toward each other.

This is it. I'm right over the peg now. I stare into the eyes of the wolf as I bring the hammer down as hard as I can, screaming when I hear the clang snap of the trap releasing and I go flying back into the dirt, clutching my flashlight like a baton.

I sputter and cough as I work to catch my breath, but the rumbling of an angry growl has me frozen yet again.

"Oh shit," I whisper, noting that the wolf is free and standing over me. His fangs are so much scarier from one foot away. Jesus Christ. I'm going to get rufen. "You're free now. G-go!"

2/3

Chapter One Hundred Fifty-One

stop po hug my time I we

In glad you're okay, I whisper, closing my my as he lunges forward high worse, the mounds tace myself for the pain Chapter Comments

KKN

oooh another mate? the suspense is killing me

Marietta Gary

Hot damn.

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*SHAPE

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,595 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Two DELILAH

I don't scream because - well-what would be the point? In twenty-one years I have yet to hear of someone saving themselves from sudden death by screaming for their life. It's already over, I might as well just accept it. Now if only I had a way to not feel the pain of those fangs plunge into my skin. Too bad I didn't get knocked out when I flew back if I had, the wolf might have thought I was dead and left me alone.

Come to think of it... why am I not dead yet?

Did the wolf spontaneously combust?

Taking a deep breath to confirm that I'm still alive, I relax my muscles a bit and focus on the heavy breathing that I'm hearing that is not my own. I feel something tickle beneath my chin and I realize the wolf is now sniffing my throat. What the hairy Nttle dent? I open my eyes slowly, swallowing my fear when the wolf's big ass head fill my vision.

He's not growling anymore, he's just sniffing and licking and pushing my face to the side.

"Hey!" I chuckle, putting my hands up in surrender and hoping to keep them on my wrists. "You're welcome," I say, carefully stretching my arm upward so that I can pet his neck. You're an idiot! What the hell are you doing? But the wolf only seems to want more of my pets and drops his heavy ass head right onto my chest. This is the fucking craziest thing I've ever experienced I scratch him behind the ears and under his chin, then over the back of his head and the whole while he is licking at my face. "You're crazy," I giggle.

Another howl sounds from somewhere beyond the trees and my wolf's ears perk up and his eyes snap to mine.

"They're not my friends," I tell him. "They have to be yours." God Im dumb.

When a chorus of howls suddenly go up all around us, I allow myself a little more fear.

Oh m

my God," I whisper, knowing that this wall's pack has just surrounded our little piece of shit cabin and I am the only thing o

My wolf whines again then jumps up to stalk away from me toward the dark of the woods. I sit up as quickly as I can and shine the light around the surrounding trees. One, two, three, four, five, six, holy shit!" I stopped counting the pairs of eyes when I got to six because, well, six is plenty, I don't think it'll take much more than that to well and truly fuck up my night.

Stepping back slowly, I pause when my wolf turns around. He is studying me almost like he expects me to follow him, but that's just not going to happen, so I wave. "Bye!"

He huffs at me, a strange rumble coming from his throat as he leaps ten feet in my direction just to lick my face and then disappear into the dark

That's funny, his paw looked completely heated. How odd

An entire pack of wolves surrounded this place tonight after my wolf bowled into the darkness. I always knew wolves were smart and loyal, but I never realized how swiftly they'd respond to another's call

Thope your friends know who saved you!" I call out into the trees, hoping the circle of wolves is no longer converging on this tiny matchstick cabin.

My chest is heaving as I once again shine my flashlight into the trees, but they're empty now and somehow lonelier. A terrible sense of loss tumbles over me and I'm met with

the urge to cry. What the hell? What's wrong with me? Maybe it's the adrenaline dying off. Shaking the strange sensations off, I shudder and step into the cabin... but for some odd reason, I don't shut the door.

DRAVEN

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Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Two-

I watch Angle's face carefully as I finger the gemstones on what I have feeling is my ring. Her eyes go wide and her cheeks redden, but surprisingly she doesn't pull her hand away.

"1-um... found it," she says finally, cracking a nervous smile. "It's a little small, but I'm going to have it sized."

Over my dead body. "You found it," I repeat suspiciously. "Where? A ring of this value should've been turned in to the police. It's really beautiful and I'm sure the rightful owner is missing IL" I let my smile slide from my lips as I released her hand.

"Maybe," she replies, not missing a beat. She turns away from me to glare at Felix. "Or maybe the rightful owner can just get another one,"

Felix cocks an eyebrow, still stationed at the door in hopes that Angle will leave. "What are you looking at me for?" Felix snaps, with a roll of her eyes. "It's not mine."

"It certainly isn't and it never will be Angle says. "I didn't for a momore think that you are the girl it was intended for."

Felix snorts, "Are you ready to leave yet?"

"No," I say, walking past her to the door, only to turn around and block the exit. "Why did you say it like that? Intended for? Where did you find it? Tell me the truth."

Angie swallows thickly, her back going straight. Her dark brown eyes appear wet for a moment, but she battles the tears back quickly. Taedora watches silently from the other side of the room, her muscles tensed. Without even checking, I know she's ready to pounce on Miss Angie should she try anything stupid

My mind is whirling now, flipping the facts over one way then the next. The message in the box is the one puzzle piece that does not fit for me. Unless, Angie somehow knows that the guys are Shifters and hist never let on. According to Rainier, she doesn't, but he might be very, very wrong. I mean, it's not like he paid enough attention to her to know for sure. In a way, I feel for her, I do. A hot as hell Sheriff swept her off her feet once and then married her, only to basically ignore her for the duration of their time together.

It was wrong of him to use her the way he did and I'm sure he realizes that now. Especially, she was as ignorant about Shifters as I was. Because that would mean she truly thought he loved her and... he just didn't.

But... if she knew about them, and was just pretending not to, that's an entirely different thing. That would mean that she was aware of the fact that she was not his mate and knew he would never truly be her

"I think it's best if I just go," Angie says suddenly, walking my way. When I don't budge, her face begins to puff a little and I have to wonder how many times she did that while yelling at Rainier. So unattractive. "Excuse me, Draven. I don't have any issues with you and I don't want any, but I would like to go now!"

I kick my foot backward and the front door goes swinging shut. Angle fuming, but I smile as sweetly as I can. "You can go when you tell me why you took that ring out of its little black box and left that sick little message in its place."

Her eye begins to twitch as she glares down at me. "You'll move or I'll move you."

Taedora chuckles, "Oh-ho-ho, I would like to see that." In an instant, she's coming up off the wall to step in front of me. "You touch her even once and I'll put you through that goddamned window bitch."

I smile to myself when I notice Taedora's fingernails sharpen and her braids begin to twitch. This means she's fighting her shift and judging by the sudden fear in Angie's gaze, I'm assuming Tardora's eyes have started to change. I glance over my shoulder at Felix to see she's staring out the window not paying attention, which might just be good thing. When I turn back, Angie's eyes are full of tears and Taedora has stepped to the side.

"She asked you a question," Taedora says. "You're either going to answer it or you and I can go outside and I can show you a magic trick."

Angle nods, meeting my gaze. "You're right, I took the ring" She shakes her head sadly. "I-I found it in Rainier's pocket when he was in the shower," she shrugs, a tear falling slowly down her cheeks. I knew he probably bought it for one of his whores, so I took it out of the box and hid it in the bottom of a spice jar. When he came back from Vancouver and never mentioned it was missing, I knew I was right."

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Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Two

okay." I say, in acceptance. Sounds plausible enough. "What about the message?"

Her face goes blank. "I didn't see any message.

"You didn't put a message in the box after taking the ring?" I ask, disappointed.

"No!" she snaps. "I wish I had. Poetic justice

I don't think I believe her. But with Felix here it wouldn't do to have Tedora drag the truth out, just yet. Besides, I never even told Domonic about it. The only guys who know are Koda and Bart, "Okay." I say slowly. "You can go.*

She

starts to leave, but I hold out my hand, still blocking the doorway and she groans. "What now?"

"The ring," I say firmly. "It's mine and I want it."

She scoffs, her eyes going from Felix to me then back again. "Bullshit! Why would Rainier have your ring?"

"Well, I say

sweetly. "Maybe, because I'm just another whore."

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,434 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Three

to do the two of Tudora wer downstairs to fix

some codtails. Now that all was quiet, I took a seat on the couch next to admiring the ring on her finger. I was still curious as to what prompted her visit. I hadn't even been in this place for a "Jou knew he was married," I say softly, watching her suffen and lower her hand to look at me.

cayes falling over my tank to the bite mark near my shoulder before lifting up again. "I did. But I also knew the

aking my head. "Gomplicated? I don't know w

94," she says with a

knew she wasn't the one for him, just as he wasnt the one for her."

ut if you only just met her tonight?" I complain. "I mean if she wasn't such a bitch, I would have felt sorry for

Draven nods,

"Don't go feeling guilty now. Especially when it comes to her. I have a feeling there's more to her

bad jerks up and

the sparkling diamonds and emeralds that now adorn her left ring finger. "It sounded to me like shile. Judging by what I've seen so far, I can only assume he was."

ups suddenly, her lips in a firm line. "He's not like that. He didnt. He wouldn't have."

lhan to laugh, staring at her incredulously. "They're not divorced! What the hell do you call me?"

Her eyes soften and she reaches toward me. "You're different, Felix. I promise, you are."

sty eyes well up, moisture threatening to spill. I want to believe that I am. I really, really do. But I just can't see it. "How? How am I

She sighs, scooting closer. "I can't be the one to answer that question. Its not my place. But I think you know. You don't want to risk it. You don't want give any real power to the strange connection you think you have with him, because it feels like a fairytale. But I promise, I take a deep breath, wondering just how it is that she knows exactly what I'm feeling. Then my eyes find a peculiar mark along her neck,

mine is and I gasp. If she notices what I'm looking at, she doesn't let on, just smiles. "Where is Rainier? Do

in or around the same

you know? ask.

A quirky smile turns her lips and the nods. "He's with my fiance and the rest of their... pack," she laughs.

"Pack," I repeat absently, thinking that they sound like animals.

"Took," she says. "Painier asked me to come here and check in on you. He knew he couldn't be here tonight and he was afraid that when he showed up in the morning that you would be gone."

I nod, a watery smile cresting my lips. "I was going to be," I admit. I'm still not sure I should stay."

"I sew," Draven says slowly, before suddenly reaching out a hand and running her finger along my bite.

I stare at her, noting the silent smile in her eyes as she takes her hand back. "When I first met Damente," she says. "He didn't want me

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Three

here. He literally ordered Bart rat to hire

keep away from me." Her eyes go glossy as her hand slides over her fat goomjet something pulling us together. Bi there were things about his

was....., afraid of me. Afraid of... losing me. And I know this wont make

Domonic scared is what pushed Rainier into marrying Angie. For hum

you're not."

Things that

"What does that mean?" I whisper, really wanting to understand.

At that exact moment. Tardora comes racing in with our drinks. "Here

She cuts off, looking from Draven to me and then back again.

"What is it?" Draven shoots up, something in Tandora's voice putting her on instant ade

"There's been an accident at home," Taedora says anxiously. "Goose called when I was in the hills"

"Hunters?!" Draven exclaims, her face going white with fright.

"Poachers," Toedora clarifies, her face deadly serious.

"Domonic" Draven starts, cutting off when Tedora shakes her head.

"Gayle," Tardora chokes out.

"Oh my God," Draven hisses.

"Poachers?" I inquire, thinking of the wolf I heard howling two nights ago. "You guys have poachers out here?"

Taedora nods, her hazel eyes firing with rage. "They haven't been ad- in awhile, but in the last two scoffs we se natioid i number of traps we've been coming across in the woods" "Is she...?" Draven asks.

Taedora shakes her head. "I don't know. But I have to get to Blackjack Creek and I know the plan was for us to stick around betr longer but-"

"No!" Draven says. "You have to go, I understand." She turns to me. "I don't think Felix is going anywhere zzyway. Are you Felic"

I sigh heavily, my eyes shuttering. "No, I'm not g

going anywhere. At least, not tonight."

Do y you have a phone?" Draven asks me.

I shake my head, no. I lost it somewhere. But there's a landline in this room. An old cordless phone. You gave me your number.

She smiles then hurries to write her number next to the phone. "If you need anything at all, cali

"You're one of us now," she whispers and I think of the mark on her neck that matches my own..

she says, grabbing me in a hug

Watching through the window as they leave, I smile to myself. Thinking that for once, I might have actually made a friend.

"Finally alone," I say, reaching in my back pocket to pull out the note that Rainier 1 for me. I've been going crazy on the inside wanting to read it, but knowing I should be alone when I did,

Looking down at the neatly written letter, I smile. His penmanship is a precise as his knife skills are and the thought sends a wave of heat through my belly. The man really is too sexy. As 1 begin to read, tears till my vision again and I end up wishing he was here. 2/3 08:48 Fri, Nov

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Three

I read silently at first, only reading out loud near the end. "...I had no idea how much I would want you when you finally came along and no idea how desperate I would be to keep you. So when you asked me if there was anyone else, I didn't lie to you when I said no. It's the truth. You are the only one for me, so no, there isn't anyone else. When explain everything to you tomorrow, I can only hope it will be enough for you to forgive my mistakes. You were wrong about me, I do belong to you, I always have. So, If you're wondering where i went 's just say that I went to find your woll. He and I will both be out there tonight, running through tonight and why I couldn't be here... the hills and waiting for morning 1 will be back as soon as the sun rises, so please... don't leave. Love Rainier," I choke out that last part. I have full on waterworks going by the time I'm finished and little droplets have splattered all over my beautiful note.

Clutching the letter to my chest, I think of what Draven was trying to tell me before she left. About Demonic being afraid of her. Is that what he means when he wrote that he had no idea how much he would want me... Was he afraid of having someone he loved? "Oh stop it, Felix! You don't know that he loves you." But... that is what it sounded like. "I went to find your woll," 1 read that line again, my brow furrowing. "His eyes," I say to myself, thinking of the way they looked when he was begging me to stay. "They were crazy.... animal eyes." I shake myself, folding the note back up and pocketing it once again. "Don't get ridiculous, Felix. There's probably a logical explanation for what you saw. Just not one that you can think of right now."

I chuckle at myself turning away from the window just as the long melodic howl of a wolf sounds in the woods behind the bar.

Oh my God!

I plant my face back in the window once more. My eyes scour the woods for any sign of movement. Another howl, this one closer, has me wanting to step outside and before I can stop myself, that is what I am doing. 1 creep out the back exit, making sure the door is unlocked before I close it behind me. It's probably around midnight now and the fog is rolling in pretty heavily, so I really can't see mòch in the

trees.

"Damn it," I complain, turning around to head back inside.

That's when I notice the dome light on in Hector's car and the shadow of a man in the driver's seat.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,746 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Four RAINIER

My ears twitch in the soft breeze that floats between the trees. While following the ridgeline and the trail of the intruding wolves, WE scented something even more disturbing. Humans that bear fire from their arms. Our Alpha sent us to investigate and one of us was almost caught. We were just about to converge on the shooters when we heard his Gamma cry of warning. Circling back for him, we found him freed by a human female. Her aura was much different than the shooters and so we left her to head away from the danger. Even though our brother didn't want to leave her, he did. But I was watching him as we ran together, and I could sense his mind wandering back to her. Perhaps he feared for her safety. After all, she did free him. Something humans rarely do when it might mean their own skin.

Now, we are racing through the hills behind the city. Howling as we run toward the beaches where yet another foreign wolf's scent seemed to permeate. Will will track this wolf as far as we can and then return to the shooters. It is our duty to protect these hills and forests. As well as the creatures that live within. They caught something. We heard it. A lioness cried out into the dark. It sounded like they shot her and although we knew she was probably dead, that didn't mean the humans could be allowed to leave after such a crime. No. We would find them and we would tear them apart.

Something in the breeze catches my attention. A smell so sweet I stutter my steps and veer left, away from my pack, I can't explain what's just come over me, or why I suddenly have to find the source of the sweetness. Images flash through my mind as I descend the hillside, causing me to growl in frustration at the unwelcome thoughts. There is something down there that I wanted. Something I'd forgotten until that smell found its way into the wind. But now, as I'm remembering, a face flashes before my eyes and I let loose with a howl to signal that I've changed course. My human is down there somewhere. My... mate.

-FELIX

Oh no! No! Hector?

As inconspicuous as I can, I tiptoe back toward the har entrance. I make it almost the entire way before the crunch of gravel behind me

freezes me on the spot.

"Hello Felix," a cold voice sounds at my back and my entire body shudders.

I keep walking at first, thinking that he hasn't seen my face and that if I can just get back inside everything might be okay. I can pretend that I m not Felix and he can fucken leave. I'm close, just a couple feet left to go and I'll be safely hidden behind that heavy metal door.

"I know it's you," he says calmly. "I'd know that ass anywhere. Turn around."

Fuck. I have to do it. I have to turn around. If I don't... who knows what he might do.

"Antman," I say calmly, not wanting him to see how just the sight of him frightens me.

He's bigger than the others Hector and his friends. I've always tried my best to steer clear of him and it wasn't too hard to do because he was always busy. Antman isn't the same kind of threat that Hector is. Both are pretty awful in their own right, but Antman is altogether worse. He's not a gang leader like Hector, not exactly. Antman is the one they go to, to settle disputes between rival neighborhoods. His word is law in some parts of Southern California and the only people who know about him are the people who run his underground network. Hector is one of those.

Antman smiles, flashing a full set of pearly white teeth as he saunters toward me. His thick black hair is neatly trimmed as always, his tribal tattoos and muscles on full display beneath a crisp white tank top. Doesn't he ever get cold? Maybe not, considering he has ice in his blood.

"What are you doing here, babydoll? Where is my boy? Where is Hector

"He's in jail," I say matter of factly. "He was arrested for a shooting at this club down
n the street."

1/3

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Four

"Is that right?" he says, his face wrinkling with irritation. "Well, we'll go and get him out then. Come on."

I don't move, racking my brain for an excuse to get back upstairs and call Draven. "How did you find us if Hector didn't call you?" I ask, slowly taking a step backward while he's facing the Cadillac

He laughs, then shrugs. "That would fall into the category of my little secret," he snaps. And while we're an secrets- why don't you tell me how it is that you're holding up in some bar that Hector's car has been parked behind for three days. Is this where he was arrested?" he asks, stepping closer. "Are you the one who called it in?"

I shake my head, not liking where his mind is going. "No! Don't be ridiculous. I wasn't even here when he was arrested. He ditched me outside of the club after one of his bullets grazed my shoulder. I was taken to the hospital with some other guy."

"He ditched you," he repeated, his eyebrows drawing together. "Just left my property in the parking lot of some club. That's not good. He'll definitely be answering for that. Now let's go."

He turns around and I use the moment to step back toward the bar the whip around to open the door. Suddenly, I'm shoved from behind and I go slamming into the bar door. The air is knocked from my lungs as Antman's heavy body crashes into mine from behind. His hot breath fans across my cheeks: "Dumb move, babydoll. I mean, reilly stupid." He grabs the back of my head and slams it forward into the door so hard stars sparkle across my vision and my body goes mashing into the ground. Antman leans over and spits, "You fucking cunt. You think you can just do whatever you want? Did you forget that I own you? That pussy and that ass - they belong to me. And as long as you're able to fuck, I will sell you. When your tits finally drop, and your sweet little cunt runs dry- that is when I will set you free. The way you behave between now and then will decide whether you leave my shackles with a fat severance check or in a pine box. Now get your fucken ass up and let's go get my boy."

I whimper, dragging myself up off the ground slowly, my limbs protesting and my head throbbing. Once on my feet, I sway a bit and Antman snatches me by my hair, dragging me toward Hector's Cadillac. He throws me against the passenger door and traps me between his arms, his cold black eyes locking on my neck

"It looks like you've been earning a few bucks on the side, babydoll. Is that what you're doing up in that bar? Huh? Have you been fucking the owner of that place? I shake my head no and he snickers. "I'm not stupid bitch. After we get Hector, I'll bring you back down here and we'll take what he owes me out of whatever's inside. Now get in."

"You don't own me," I whisper as he turns around, not really surprised when he doesn't hear me. I didn't say it for him. I said it for me.

Glancing up at the apartment window, with its light still on glowing warm against the night, I say goodbye. For a minute there, I had chance to have everything I wanted. In the back of my mind, I wonder if Rainier will look for me when he sees that I am gone. Don't do that to yourself, Felix. Don't hope for a rescue that will kely never come

As Antman walks around to the other door a wolf howls again and I catch my breath. This time... the wolf is much closer. Even Antman freezes in his steps, his body turning toward the woods behind the parking lot.

"What the fuck was that?" he snaps, pulling a
pulling a gun from his belt and watching the trees.

"Sounded like a wolf," I say flatly and he glares.

"Yeah-uh-huh, thank you

you Crocodile Dundee," he cocks his gun and begins to walk more slowly toward the driver's side of the car.

I have to fight a laugh because he looks so afraid and I cover my mouth with both hands to suppress a giggle.

"Lets just get the fuck out of here," he snaps, noticing my amusement.

Lowering his gun, he makes it two more steps before a huge black and brown woll leaps from the trees, growling and snarling as it stalks toward the car. I gasp in shock, the animal is hugel Like... enormous. I always knew wolves were bigger than dogs, but I never know how much bigger. This beast is almost large enough to ride.

"Holy fucking shit," Antman hisses. "What the fuck was Hector thinking coming out here? Get in the car. Hurry up. He takes a step toward

2/3

Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Four

the dover side door slowly and the moment he does the wolf

seading

If you tire ever going to put your instincts to the test, Felt Now's the time at Atman. He's completely focused on the wolf and so scared I can see the gun trembling in his hand, I take a few silent step back toward the bar and toward the wold

Im not going with you, I say loudly, meeting the yellow and black eye of the wolf as I step past the trunk of the Car

The words from Rainier's letter ring through my head...I went to find your wolf and suddenly I'm confident the animal won't hurt me

"Bitch are you crazy?"" Antman trupi.

The wolf snarls again, growling as he places himself between me and Atman. Now that I am this close to him, I feed it. There is something unexplainable and undeniable between us. A pull so great that I'm tempted to place my hand on its for. It's the strangest thing I've ever experienced and right then I know, I never want to leave this place.

Antman shouts, "First I'll kill this fucken dog bitch, and then I'll teach you a lesson you'll never forget!

"No!" I scream as the wolf leaps toward him and the shot from his gun fills the air.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,352 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Five

Bir gun shots rang mud as the soulf charged at Antman. At first I didn't think the wolf was going to stop. I actually smiled seeing that the beast appeared to avoid being hit. But then a loud yelp was heard as the wolf flew backward and my chest felt like it might explode. Now, I lay over the top of him, the wolf, Crying into his fur and staring into the beautiful jewel yellow of his eyes. Blood covers my hands and soaks into the wolfs chest as he lay there whining, I stroke my hand over his magnificent coat as I scream. What the fuck? Are you crazy? Get in the car bitch," Antman says from behind me. Or the next one goes into your head."

The wolf beneath me growls, his lips turning up as life seems to flare in his eyes. "Shh," I tell him, petting his head as tears stream down my cheeks, "He still."

"Felix!" Antman yells again. "Get in the fucking car

I can hear him step toward me, but I don't let the wolf go. His blood is seeping into the ground and I can't help but feel like it's my fault. If I'd only just gotten into the car- or if I'd just stayed in the apartment like Rainier wanted me to, none of this would have happened. "How many more bullets do you have in that gun?" I ask.

"Enough," Antman says and I see the barrel of his gun rise next to my face toward the wolf's head.

"No!" I snap, showing my body over the wolf. That's not what I

Suddenly I'm snatched off the wolf's body and thrown onto the trunk of the car. Antman presses into me, holding his gun to my head. "You know, I've always wanted to fuck you. I think that's just what I'm going to do the minute we get back. Or maybe I'll just do it right here. In front of that dying stray." He kicks my legs apart to push his hips into mine. "Would you like that?" He hisses, his tongue dragging up my throat as I whimper. "I think you would. Big boss man sticks his dick into the sweet blond barble. Maybe... I'll even like it so much that I'll keep you for myself. Yeah... you'd like that." His tongue dips into my ear. "I think I would too."

A feral growl sounds behind Antman and he freezes. My eyes fall to the wolf's chest as it puffs up and I stare in shock as he drags himself upward and onto his paws. "Oh my God," I say, watching in amazement as six bullets scatter across the ground beneath

the wolf, the sound of them tinkling like coins onto the asphalt and causing Antman to turn back around,

"The fuck?" Antman hisses in fear as the wolf stalks closer.

Suddenly another wolf barrels through the trees, growling and snarling as he approaches. This one is large and red-brown, with glowing silver eyes. Then another, and another follows behind. A black one, a gray one, another in a mangle of gray and white. There are all huge and frightening, with teeth that look sharp enough to tear through metal. The intelligence in their eyes as they study the blood on the ground sends a shiver of amazement through me. When their eyes latch on to the gun in Antman's hand and they growl at him I almost laugh

"Holy shit!" Antman snarls, pointing his little gun at four wolves that are stalking forward like silent death. "Fuck you bitch. Stay here if you want," Antman says, edging away from me and stepping slowly toward the driver's side of the car, "I hope they tear you to pieces." Suddenly there are more wolves surrounding the front of the car and I gasp in fear, falling away from the Cadillac and onto the ground. Antman scrambles to open the door, but he's much too slow and in a flurry of movement they're on him. Antman's screams are drowned out by the snarling and growling of what looks to be ten or more wolves as he is dragged into the trees and I'm left gasping on the asphalt.

Oh my God! I have to call Er

to call Draven

I leap up, my eyes going to the six bullets in the puddle of blood where the wolf was once laying. How in the fuck?"Where-" I cut off as the purr of a giant muzzle nestles into the back of my head.

1/3 Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Five

Oh God. I turn around to find the brown black wolf with the yellow eye-standing behind me and the longer I stare at him the more I see him. Hes... familiar. He doesn't smell like a wolf. He smells like... vanilla bourbon and the sob that rips from my throat is one of both disbelief and of acceptance.

He whines at me, licking my face, then he shoves me toward the back of the bar as if telling me to get my rass back inside and I smile.

Thank you," I say, throwing my arms around his neck as a wolf howls in the woods behind us. "Thank you."

As he walks away, leaving me at the door to the bar, I blow him a kiss and he growls in the most un-menating way before he disappears into the woods. I hear him howl once

more into the night before I sigh in contentment. With one last glance at the Cadillac I race back upstairs, locking the doors behind me as I go.

I race for the phone, noting that it is now two in the morning as I dial the number Draven left me. She answers on the first ring.

"Felix]"

Draven! I need to um....-L...something just" I sputter, not knowing how to explain what I'm feeling Not knowing how to say the crazy things I am thinking in my head without looking nuts.

I mean what if I'm totally wrong?

Slow d

down Felix, she says. "Did something happen? Did Angle come back?"

n-no. Not Angie," I start, taking a deep breath. "Antman."

"Antman?"

Hector's boss. H-be came here and he

"He was there? Is he still there?" she asks and I can hear her scrambling about her house probably getting ready to come down here.

were these wolves and they

1-1 don't know. You see because... um... there were

"Wolves?" her voice lightens. "Okay. Go on... Tell me about them."

I close my eyes for a moment, picturing Rainier's crazy eyes and thinking of my fucked up dream as I gather my words. "Th-they took him. He was trying to make me leave with him and the wolves... they came out of the trees and they took him away. They dragged him away! It was the craziest thing I've ever seen. I was so scared and they... they saved me."

She sighs into the

phone and I can almost hear the smile in her voice when she says. "I'm not surprised."

My heart begins to thump erratically. "Y-you're not?"

"No," she replies. "I'm not."

"Draven," I start. "Today, before Rainier left-he um- well, I think he

"Bit you. Rainier bit you, didn't he?"

"Yes," I hiss. "He did. You don't seem surprised about that either."

"That's because I'm not. I saw his mark on you when I was over there."

"So I'm not going crazy," I say, relieved. "I really did see Rainier's eyes change, didn't I?"

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Five

"We really should talk in person I just wish there was a way for me to get to you, but I don't drive. Maybe if we walk and meet halfway Maybe

"I-I can drive," I say, walking toward the window to stare down at Hector's Cadillac. "I'll use Hector's Cadillac. I can come to you,"

She takes a deep breath. Are you sure? It's really foggy right now. Although Domonic will kill me, it might be best if we walk How far is it? Are there a lot of turns?"

"Actually, no. There's only one turn. A left at the stoplight by the marina then it's straight up the hill. The house is at the very end. "Okay," I say, determination in my gut. "Tim on my way. When I get there... I want to hear everything."

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,130 words]

Chapter One Hundred Fifty Six

Timply sy diy f

Hey, Fay dily, lay dow

the gun, dragging syste

Just park in the 's How to the new one

last park in the bark at tamami

the grins, taking a seat next to

"The strip club?" I map,

ignoring for the first time what bar bitches

"Yes," she says with a roll of her eyes.

"Out?" I smile. "That's cool" My ex

wadays meant, gang come the georgian and going up the act to fatter to

"The tweed?" I ask, curious.

She only nods, her bright green gaze shattering

"The only thing this place is missing is a fireplace, I comment

She smiles softly, taking a sip of her coffee. "Yeah I don't have the one in our bedroom upstairs and down here. He has done it I need a fireplace."

"Right," I agree, my eyes falling to her neck and to the mark there

"So..." she says with a raise of her eyebrows, "Your woodier

and viable now in the dim light. So...

I choke - the hot coffee sputtering from my lips and shooting across the elegant coffee table honest to God cough up my lungs. "1-1." I stammer ungraciously, leaning forward to digest me and grant her my full attention. "Yes," I admit. 1-1 was but I know how stupid explanation for what I thought I saw and 1-

13

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Six

"He is," she says matter-of-factly and I whimper.

"Oh my fucking shit, I hiss, clamping my eyes shut. She really hit that. She said that Rider is a werewolf,

"So is Domonic, she admits, "So is Hart. And so is little Ryder that you set on the yacht the other day."

My heart is thumping as I think of the wolves in the parking lot and the way they dragged Antman away. Did they kill him? Well, of course they did, duh. he gets drugged away by wolves and lives?

The wolves tonight," I begin, my eyes still closed. Do you think they were

"I do," she interrupts and I feel her hand squeeze mine, so I open my eyes. "I've never actually seen them all together during the full moon

way you did tonight, but I'm more than certain it was them. They were protecting you. Because of who you are."

the

"Who I am?" I snap incredulously, "I am nobody! I am a fanciful ex-honger! Why would they..." I gasp, my hand going to the mark on my neck, "Oh!"

Draven nods, her eyes falling toward my bite mark. "You are not nobody, You are Rainier's mate. His soulmate. It is why he marked you and it is why he refuses to let you go."

I stare at her. "H-he told you a-about me? About... biting me?"

She nods. "He did," she places her coffee on the table and scoots closer to me. "He

awa

so upset about it when he did it, he called me right

"He was upset about it?" I ask, falling sad. "He regrets

She shakes her head vehemently. "No! Not in the way you think. I mean well - he's just upset that he didn't ask permission first. He was afraid that you were going to leave him. Because of Angle and I guess...he panicked."

"I was," I say with a nod, my eyes filling with tears. I'm not a homewrecker. At least... I never wanted to be."

She smiles, shaking her head softly. "You're not. There's a lot to explain. So I guess, know about Shifters?"

1

I guess, the first thing I need to ask you is... how much do you

"Shifters?!?!?"

RAINIER

The sun is barely visible through the clouds when the twelve of us wake in the woods naked. I'm sore and there is blood on me. Mine and... someone else's. What the fuck happened last night?

"Anyone else a little concerned as to what we might have done last night?" Quinn asks and I see for the first time that he too is covered in blood. His wrist is painted in his own and the rest of him in the same singer's blood that I have on myself feel strange. Like... I don't know... kind of sad. What the fuck? I'm never sad."

"Dom," I start, looking toward him for answers. Out of all of us, it is usually the Alpha that might have an idea of what we got into the night of our forced shift.

"The blood doesn't belong to our females, Domonic states with a shrug, as if that is all that matters. "And I don't feel any pain, so they must be fine."

"Well we're smack dab in the middle of Blackjack," Quinn gripes. "And I must have come across a trap last night or something. Because my wrist is caked with my own blood."

"Right, Timmons says. "That's what happened to me last time, remember

2/3

Chapter One Hundred fifty-Six

"Well, I was 17" I jodorm then. May blood is all rows my chest

"Bye who, though? Lief asks thoughtfully, sniffing his own chest and dried and then. The Dodon MA HAT HEA

"A funter's maybe? Timmons suggests

"Can someone account for the word as fack metanoly cloud that winst te hanging cows my head een muuri,

"Maybe you found your mate last night and she was a bear shifter, Tirinzen jokes and Quinn starkes hi in the horse of the bead

"You're mate is a humor, asshole, Fuck you," Quinn snaps, almost hostile

"Right," Domonic agrees. "Let's get to Gryffin's den. We can get clothes there and maybe Grove krom something wyle was on parast night. Maylie the knows why we're out here in their backyard covered in some dude's blood.

In agreement, the twelve of us shift into our wolves and make the two mile trek to Gryffins. The

foreboding in the air that has my fur standing on end. "Somethings happened, I hits, coming into myself and pounding on the door

Taedora answers looking half alive. "Whoa! She screeches right away, dosing her eyes. "Way too much dick to go with my morning Goose!" She turns around only to get snatched by Domonic,

"What the fuck? What are you doing here Tar? Whos watching Draven Domonic hisses, his eyes suddenly wild.

"First off," she snaps, ripping her arm away from his. "Don't fucking grab me, ever. I'm not one of your pups" She sighs, her eyes falling sad. "Draven's fine, I just spoke to her. I was actually about to head back over. I'm assuming you haven't been home yet?" she asks. Domonic shakes his head. "No. We woke up in your backyard, drenched in blood. We were hoping you could tell

She shakes her head. "You might want to come in for a minute. Goose is with Gayle. She was attacked by poachers last night."

"Poachers?!" Domonic snarls and the rest of us growl. "Is she...?"

Gayle sighs. "She'll live. She's recovering. But... she barely escaped with her life."

"Maybe that's who we ripped into," I say,

Tandora shakes her head. "Oh no sir," she smirks. "You should call Draven. Felix is with her and boy do they have a story to tell you."

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,002 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Seven DELILAH

I wake up in the cold of a foggy morning to the crazy sounds of my brother Cane and his dumbass friend Charlie packing up the pickup truck so we can head back to Oregon.

"If we get there now and tell them what we saw, they have to let us in Cane is saying as I drag my ass up off the couch.

"What the hell? I snap, noticing that the pair of them are covered in blond and scratches. That's when I remember the wolf from last night and I have to wonder what it is they caught last night.

"D! We have to head home to TEF Headquarters. The cabin is paid for a week, so you'll have to stay here until we get back," Cane says, grabbing his keys off the table.

"What?" I screech. Fuck that! "Oh hello no! No! I'm not staying here! And what did you guys catch last night? When did you come back?"

Cane takes a deep stupefying breath and sits next to me, his face deadly serious. "What we caught last night, we can't talk about to you. Not here. Not yet. We have to take our discovery to The Elite Few. They're gonna wanna know about this shit."

I snort. "You're fucking loopy. They don't give a fuck about you idiot! They hardly gave a fuck about dad! And what the hell do you mean, discovery? You two falling into a bramble is hardly breaking news. Let me guess, you thought you caught a wolf, but it turned into a fairy and snaked right out of your grasp."

He shakes his head, his eyes lighting with excitement. "We caught a lion he hisses, and Charlie whoops into the air. "But it wasn't a lion when we got to her. She turned into a woman."

Where's a can of soup when you need one?

"You better hope you're lying, Cane. Because what it sounds like to me, is you set an illegal trap and caught a human, I grumble, leaping, up from my place on the couch.

"I swear to God, D! We saw her! She was a lion! And then we shot her and... she was a girl!" Charlie says and I simply hold my hand up in his face.

"Shut up!" I scream, closing my eyes. My mind is whirling with images of my brother being carted off to prison for murder and then me right afterward for killing his idiot best friend. "Where's the body, Cane "What?" Cane snaps. "That's what I'm trying to tell you, D. She got away! After we shot the lion It.... I dunno... shifted into a naked girl! Then, when we released the trap, her eyes popped open and she ran away!" "Cane," I begin, manic laughter bubbling from my throat. "Just how much did you drink last night before you headed out?"

"Nothing!" he and Charlie snap at the same time. "We just had some coffee, that's all."

"Yeah right, coffee," I say in disbelief. So there is nobody, then. No lion. No imaginary female. Good. Okay, okay."

"What happened to o you, D?" Cane says suddenly, his eyes on the front of my shirt.

Looking down I notice for the first time that I'm covered in blood. Oh shit. The wolfpled all over me. "It's nothing. I just... I spilled my soup.*"

"Oh," his dumb ass says, not thinking anymore about it. "Crazy. It looks like blood."

"Doesn't it?" I chirp, racing for the bathroom with a clean outfit from my bag. "Don't you idiots dare leave without me! And we're not"

1/2

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Seven

going to the Headquarters with your crazy story. They'll have you committed for sure!"

"You're wrong," Cane says to my back. "Dad and the Great Earl used to tell me stories about Shifters in these woods. Why did you think it was that I always wanted to hunt here? I knew they were here!"

I spin around and glare at him. "Dad and the Great Earl said lots of things to your child's brain! You can't believe everything they've ever said to you!"

My brother gasps, his eyes falling sad and I instantly feel like a complete bitch. "I know you think I'm stupid, D. But I'm not. I know what the fuck I saw and I'm coming back for it! That Shifter is my ticket into The Elder Few, like dad wanted."

The Elder Few is made up of a bunch of rich psychopaths that have nothing better to do for fun than skin defenseless animals!" I shout. "You are my brother and I'll be damned if you become one of them!"

He flinches, gazing away from me and out toward the window. "You just don't understand. You weren't part of it. You just don't know."

"Well I know this," I hiss. "We're heading home today and I'm going to go and see that lawyer about our trust. We have to see if we can find a way to get it released early, because we can't live like this anymore. And mom's not helping. She doesn't give a fuck about us since her newest boyfriend came into the picture."

"Yeah," Cane says in agreement, "I know."

"Good," I say, relieved. "Now just let me shower and we'll head out."

"Okay"

I shower faster than I ever have, running a brush through my long red hair and then throwing on my faded denim jeans and my long sleeved green camo without even putting on my undergarments. I'm eager to get the fuck away from this place. I've got to

keep my brother from going to that fanatical camp of Elder idiots and I've got to find a way for us to make ends meet.

As I'm sitting on the toilet and putting on my boots is when I notice it. The quiet.

It's too damn get out there.

50 I step o

out of the bathroom and what I see (or rather who I don't) has me racing to the front door in a rage.

"Cane!" I shout to the empty yard. "Goddamn it! Cane!" I yell again.

The truck is gone and so is my dumbass brother.

Chapter Comments

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,536 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Eight

Stepped

into

trap?" I finish for her and she sticks with a pod

mmandos. They were young, nothing like the men from five or try Dodson a cabin about two miles up from the creek. You know creek. (in the washide. I scoped them out for a time they headed my way i was

"Yup. Like an idiot. They had some kind of weind poop

the a podlijn- and I suddenly found it hard to move. I fell and they shot

wedd I shifted back on purpose, hoping to ease Them. Thinking if they thought they shot a human girl they wind panic and I thought they did. They released the trap, but they

ng what a great prize I would be. But when I opened my eyes and

with them too, bet she didn't come

glared at them, they got spooked and I wa

Agit? Quinn's voice pipes in, his eyes going hazy

"Yeah, Gayle says. "I got the impression she wasn't into the whole thing, But she didn't stop them either"

"This girl..." Quinn starts. "What did she look like"

Gryle snickers, "I don't know. The windows at that place are filthy, but I think she had long red hair. She was tiny too. Like Emily's size." "What is it?" I ask Quinn, thinking of his wrist and the blood that was caked there when we first shifted back this morning. "What do you remember?"

His amber eyes flare, but he shakes his head, his brow furrowing. "Not sure. If we can get over to the cabin and take a look, maybe I can remember

I growl, thinking that we haven't had issues with Puachers in years. Not since my dad was Alpha. "My father and Gryffin are heading back from Montana tonight. I talk to my dad and see what he can remember of the Puachers that he used to chase out of this place." "I'll talk to my dad ton, Gayle says. "As soon as I can get a hold of him he and his women are on safari in Africa. I think he's on a mission to super-populate the globe. According to my step-mother, he just marked another female out there!

"Tucking lions," I say with a shake of my head. "Creedy as hell"

"I'm not like that," Goose snaps. "I'm saving my mark for the perfect lady cat. I haven't found her yet. But when I do, she'll be my one and only."

"That's almost cute coming from a gigolo like yourself, Quinn jokes. I almost don't believe it."

"You should talk casanova," Goose taunts back. "Wasn't that you I saw with that human waitress the other night? Parked out at the creek? Quinn chuckles, "That was so long ago. I'm not like that anymore."

"That was two days ago, Quinn," Goose says deadpan.

"What can I say? it was close to the full moon. I was in need and she offered..."

"Gross," I hiss, closing my eyes. "Not the waitress I'm thinking it is, is it? Not the one from Old Bob's Diner."

"The one and the same," Quinn replies. "She has a long, welcoming neck and a wide welcoming mouth and-"

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Fifty Eight

And she's forty damn years old 1 supply

"She's not!" Quinn denies, shoving me. She just looks forty on account of all the dick she wants,

Oh lord" Taedora shouts, "Enough guys! Gayle needs her rest! Out!

"We can't all be as lucky in tow as

in the sould proper is

and out of Coryde's

con and down the start.

"True," I agree, thinking of Draven and the fact that I have yet to call her. My phone is at home anyway, so I can't

"So you guys gonna need clothes, or what? Goose

"Nah," I reply. "We have to shift to get back to Port Orchard. I turn to Quinn and Timmons. You two circle back and check out Dobson's cabin first. See if you can find anything. That trap that Gayle mentioned, for Be careful. Meeting at the bar at noon. Goode, josûte welcome to come sit in."

"I'll be there," Goose says

Rainier grumbles, I was planning on filing for divorce this morning, but there are a few things about Angle I need to

at the meetrig

are with you guys

Tardura chuckles, sashaying into the front hall with her helmet in hand. Oh yeah! Real piece of work that Broad in. And a thief too. I met her last night. Almost ripped her a new asshole."

"What? Rainier as I say at the same time.

"Where?" I inquire.

She grins, "At the bar. With Draven."

"What the fuck was Draven doing at the bar last night?" I snap.

"She's not the only one I met with Draven last night. The evening was just full of surprises, Tandora teases. She shakes her head

That's why I told you to call her. You could have used my phone, but now I have to leave. See you for the firework show!"

"Wait a minute!" I protest, but Taedora just flips me off as she heads out the door. Not a moment later, her bike is roaring to life and purring in the distance.

"She called Angie a thief," Rainier says. "Angie went to the bar. She must have followed me yesterday morning. Why else would she head to the bar knowing it was closed?"

I turn to him, studying the guilt on his features as the rest of my pack heads outside and back into the woods. "I don't know, Rain. You tell me. Why would she? And why would Draven?"

He sighs, meeting my eyes. "Felix. My....uh... my mate..."

"Okay," I say: "What about her?"

"She... well, she was going to leave me. She found my wedding ring in my pants pocket and I didn't know what to say so I sort of.... panicked," Rainier admits, his deep voice heavy with guilt. I left her at the bar. She's supposed to start working for Bartlett." "And why am I only hearing about this woman now?" I chuckle.

"I told you before we shifted last night and... Draven knew about her. I called her about it right away. She agreed to keep Felix a secret until I knew what I wanted to do about her," Rainier shrugs.

2/3

Chapter One Hundred Fifty Eight

my gut. "The mean to tell me, that you home my mote-gout Luna - keeping secrets from

She is a little easiest to talk to then you are asshole. And she goes way better advice

4. So what then? You had your mate at the apartment we can only mean that Bartlett kere about her food I throw my hands up. "Am I the Alpha or not? Because I'm

I langle will alone the bar

ake of my head. He right ther's perfect. "Okay, fine,

het op, die klad, ander hisse Yen kow how you are. Besides, I ever giving to keep her at first, but Draven convinced me...

wont

I sigh, defeated. "Yeah She does that I shake off my anger, making a mental note to bring up the subject of mates at the meeting. "So... yo said your panicked? I pronge him.

The noch, his muscles flexing the threatened to leave me and 1.. I lost it. I marked her without her consent. I was in a haze Half shifted and out of my mind. She doesnt even know what we are! But I couldnt help myself, I bit her, and then the blacked out. I didnt know what the fuck to do! I thought maybe I hurt her, but Draven assured me she was probably fine and then promised to look in on her for

Lam sleaked Mumler? Mister Control himself? He lost his shit and marked his human mate without her consent. All because th threatened to leave him. "Your marked her, I repeat, lifting my chin in amuseme "You did. The one gig who swore he would never need Jing mote You... prepe scared of losing her."

Isinier huffs, flipping me off. Fuck you dickhead. Fuck you! At least I didn't put a stripper in my bed because I was too stubborn to gu against the rules. At least I didn't sit around and swim in whiskey for a whole fucking month because I was too much of a pussy to-"Hey!" Goose chimes in from the couch. "You guys leaving or what? With Gayle knocked out and everyone else gone, I'd like to devote a good couple hours to my porn collection if you don't mind. So either beat it... or take a seat andbeat it."

"God have mercy on you, Goose. You are disgusting" I say before dragging Rainier out the front door.

"You know what I'm thinking? Rainier says as we stand there on the porch, naked and still covered in blood.

"That I'm a pussy who was too afraid to accept his mate," I snap: "Yes. Theard you."

The shakes his head, "No. Well," he chuckles. That's true, but - 1 everything that happened at the bar during the Full Moon Shift."

thinking about the cameras. For the first time well have video of

My mood instantly lifts as I realize we don't just have them: the but. We have them. up remind him. Around our houses too." around our houses too. "Not just at t

at the bar," I

kur ajes m

meet and we shift right there on the porch. Rainier races for the Sheriff Station, where he left all of his things and me racing for home. The footage from last night, at the forefront of my mind.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,166 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Nine RAINIER

I reached the woods behind the Sheriff Station much faster than I anticipated. Out of the twelve of us, Koda and Domonic are the fastest, with Quinn and me falling in line somewhere just behind. But this morning, it's almost as if I flew through the trees. Everything ! passed bled into a whirl of colors, and each step forward felt lighter and lighter. Strangely enough, I'm not even winded and I'm just about positive I could run another hundred miles without even breaking a sweat. My entire body feels alive with movement in a way that it never has before. Almost as if my wolf has become stronger somehow. My muscles feel stretched, not worn, and a sudden rush of energy washes over me as I shift back into my human form. What the hell has come over me? Did I eat the wrong mushroom last night? Or maybe the right one?

Shaking it off, I study the dried blood that covers my chest and ribs, counting six different circular marks where the coagulation is thickest. I was definitely shot last night, that much is clear. But by who? One of the hunters? For some reason, I don't think so. Hunters don't normally pop off six rounds on one animal and the bullets that made these marks came from a handgun, not a rifle. A Glock most likely, or maybe a Beretta.

Then of course there is the blood that all twelve of us are splattered with. The blood of a human male from what I can scent, but not one that I recognize. Maybe that is who shot me? The sad truth is, we might never find out whose blood we are wearing. Such has been the way of the Full Moon Shift for as long as I can remember. It can be torturous sometimes... not knowing where you were or what you may have done. But for the most part, we don't usually come out of the shift painted in pints of A positive.

Satisfied that the woods are clear of intruders, I dip behind the outer wall of the dungeon exit, throwing on my sweatpants and t-shirt that I had stowed just inside. I should wash off the blood before I head out of here, but I'm way too eager to get to Felix. With a sigh, I head straight for my SUV that's parked out in front of the station and for the first time since the sun rose, I start to feel nervous.

Hopping into the driver's seat, my heart jolts as I remember that Angie went to the bar last night. Fucking hell. God only knows what that bitch might have said to her! Here I was betting that Angie would bow out gracefully. Thinking that she was too proud to do anything that might seem desperate. But why would she risk following me to the bar after I left her at the house? And why in fuck didn't I notice her tailing me? I don't think that Angie would do anything to humiliate herself, but I do think she would do more than a little to sabotage

me.

SHIL Thope

pe Felix re

read my note. I've never been very good at sharing how I feel or talking about my... emotions. Bleh, Never been very good at showing them either... But yesterday, when Felix told me I needed to let her go, I think I may have exhibited more than a few. At the very least, my temporary lapse of sanity made it obvious that I love... that I care deeply for her. Okay, shut up. Yeah, so I probably do love her, but I'm still an infant when it comes to all this shit, so I won't be the one saying it first! Unless of course... she takes too long to say it to me and then I'm forced to say it first just to hear it said to me! Fuck me. I need a tune up. Eve gone completely mental.

"Why am I still sitting here?!" I hiss at myself, starting the car. Felix probably already thinks I'm a fucking basket case, and my sitting out here to argue with myself isn't doing me any favors. Then again, she might just think I'm a desperate lovesick idiot who cheats on his wife. Or else... she thinks I'm a werewolf. Or both. I whined at her like a fucking child! Like a lost damian puppy. Which in truth, is kind of what I felt like. And to think, when I first met her I totally thought I could handle sending her away. How delusional. "God I hope Draven was able to talk her into staying".

I've just convinced my other personality to pull out of the parking lot when Deputy Garret knocks on my window. Fucking seriously?

"What?" I snap, the fire I've just lit under my ass to get myself out of here sputtering out.

"Old Bob called in last night to report an animal attack at the bar. He says when he was driving home from the docks sometime after midnight, he saw a man get dragged into the woods by about a dozen super-sized wolves. He wanted to organize a search party and go looking for the dude, but I told him he best wait until you got here in the morning."

Suddenly, I'm hyper aware of the splattering of blood that's visible along my collar bone and I'm cursing myself for not taking the time to bathe in the stream that runs behind the buildings. God-fucking-dammit Aha... wolves. Twelve wolves... Um, yeah... sure. Um.....

Garett snickers, his warm brown eyes shifting over my neck and throat with obvious amusement. "No worries, Rain, After the call, me and Dirk went out to investigate. We didn't find much of the guy, but what we did find made its way into the sound. Even the Glock he was carrying, although I was really tempted to keep it. It had all these fancy designs on it, and was two-tone gold. Real nice. I'll go ahead and

1/2

Chapter One Hundred-Fifty-Nine

call Old Bob and let him know fie clear to start his search party if h

Fucking humans. They never cease to amaze me. You see, this is why we love it here. The people are all either blissfully ignorant, or exceptionally loyal

Thanks G, I appreciate that. As for the gun, 11l get you one for Christmas."

"Right on," Garret says before heading back inside.

Jesus Christ! We attacked a man on the fucking street? All of mn did? If Old Bob saw it, there's a chance a few others may have too,

Glancing down at my phone as I race toward Domonics, I notice an unfamiliar number in my text messages and hit the icon to pull it up. What I see nearly sends me off the road. Unknown Number -

Hey Rainier! This is Alpha Benjamin at Village Du Loup Rouge. I have some disturbing news for you. Your father has escaped. Please get in touch with me at your earliest convenience. Holy fucking shit,

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,463 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty DELILAH

After pacing back and forth in front of the cabin for the last hour, while trying to get my brother to answer the phone, I'm on the verge of having a meltdown. That fucking shit left me out here by myself, with no farken transportation, no firepower, and not a damn thing but a few cams of soup to eat. I am not a facking Wilderness girl!

Grabbing my hair on each side of my head, I pull as hard as bloody possible and scream at the top of my lungs. The high pitched, childlike screech that trembles through the forest echoes in every direction. Proof that I am well and truly alone.

Okay you little son-of-a-bitch!" I hiss, stomping inside to grab the hammer from last night and a shorthand shovel. I head straight for the traps on the west side of the cabin first, careful to use my shovel as a plow so that I don't accidentally step into one and lose a foot. I've counted nine of these damn things around the cabin. Nine! Its a wonder those idiots didn't set them off last night, by themselves. Charlie and Cane are not exactly stealth shooters.

After facilitating a clear path all the way around the cabin, I begin the daunting task of releasing the springs with my hammer, Bitching and moaning at Cane the entire time I work, regardless of the fact that he cannot hear me. "I'm going to gather each and every stupid fucking trap you set out here around this place you little fuck, and then I am going to dig a very large, very deep hole... right in front of the goddamned entrance. Next, I'm going to dump all of those barbaric contraptions inside of it, along with a bramble or two of thorns as an added token of my love. Then finally I am going to cover the damn thing up with a loose tarp and just enough dirt to hide it from your puny, trigger happy brain. Shit... I might even be able to find a beehive, cut it down, and place it gently inside, just for you all because I know how much you like your honey. After all, what are sisters for?

I finish with a huff, all of the traps now sprung and useless and a satisfied smirk turning up one cheek. With a little more pep in my step. I dump the tools back in the cabin and grab my backpack. Making sure that all of my things are accounted for, I throw it over my shoulders and send Cane a quick text letting him know that not only is he a poor excuse for an older brother, but that he is also an Inconsiderate piece of shit. Heading back outside, I slam the door to the oversized shed of a house a touch too roughly. The entire thing trembles for a moment, and then the front door suddenly tilts off its hinges. Only staying upright because it remains latched.

"Oopsie," I whisper, stepping gingerly onto the dirt road that leads to the creek. It's at least three miles to the nearest general store- which also just happens to be the only store in the immediato vicinity. But I remember seeing a town on the map when we first drove up. Its not too far from Blackjack Creek. At least, it's not if you're driving. On foot it is bound to take quite a bit longer to get to, but I'd much rather see the sights in an actual beach town than I would like to birdwatch in the do-it-yourself cabin on the ass up side of the creek. So with a deep breath and a quick glance around, I take off down the dirt path that leads to salvation and twinkies.

to the

The nicer cabins are all on the other side of the water. We saw them when we first drove in. They're closer to each other and closer! general store, I also get the feeling that they're well guarded and the woods around them are closely supervised. In fact, I'm

sure they are because I can remember seeing a sign that read, Leave the hunting to the animals' and another with the warning, Poaching is a Felony. At the same time, I also get the distinct impression that the creek serves as a divider of sorts. Separating the safe and the lawful from the immoral and unprotected. For instance, the old man Fred Dobson (or Dobkins or Doberman or Don't really give a fuck) that we rented the cabin from, had a very large lion head mounted over his fireplace and more than a few smaller animals, like squirrels and chipmunks - that he set up to look like they were having a still life picnic (for fucks sake) - draped about his living room. According to his own admission, he was unmarried and the little stuffed critters were the only friends he had in all the world. Fucking psychopath The man was creepy to say the very least. But even so, he made sure to warn Cane and Charlie that hunting was outlawed in the area and then in the very same breath, told them that if they needed his taxidermy services before the end of the week he would give them a fifty percent discount. All on account of them renting a cabin. He also went on to suggest that they take the backroad out of town in the event that they caught one of the local wolves. The entire experience had me curious to say the least. Come to think of it, wolves were the only animals Dobson didn't have posed for us in his living room.

Heli.

As I approach the decline in the dirt road, I can finally see the glorious creekbed up ahead. Yest That means I'm only a mile away from twinkies and diet sodo

A sudden rush of sound in the trees to the right of me has me freezing in my steps. My eyes strain against the limitless expanse of evergreen trees, trying like hell to catch sight of whatever it was that just head running. My eyes narr

row as a familiar blur of what appears to be dark brown and gray fur, darts back and forth between the thickest line of trees.

1/2

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty

Could it be the wolt from last night? Maybe. Immuan, this is obviously his berritory and it shouldn't be too unusual for me to sight him again, vem that bars injured. Before I think better of it, I resume walking and shout, I'm heading into town Wolfie! Not sure if 111 be coming bark this way or not, let it I do, I'll be sure to pick up some peroxide and bandages to tend to your paw!"

i know how ridiculous I sund, but I don't care. That wolf and I connected last night. I saved his enormous ass and he freakin' licked my face with his long pink tongue. Wir bonded in a way. I guess you could say, I'm kind of like that kid from that movie White Fang. A fucking wolf whisperer or some shit.

I chuckle as I step toward the shallowest end of the creek and prepare to cross. There's a bridge, but it's further along the shoreline,

extra half mile or so to my trek. I don't mind getting a little wet if it gets me to my soda faster.

Stepping over a large gray stone and into the water, I nearly scream as a sudden rush of water pushes me deeper. The water is frickin' cold and suddenly my breaths are coming in large gasps,

"Holy crap," I complain, shivering as I decide to cross along the deeper side where the creek is calmer and holding my phone up high and away from the water.

and fifty

feet to my left when I suddenly hear the very-deep

For almost to the other side the general store looms a mere two hundred And growl of an apex predator.

That does fat sound like a fucking wolf

The growl sounds again, this time a bit closer, I don't stop walking, but I do move a bit slower. I am now torn between what presents itself as two options. One heed the sage advice of the many experts that appear on Animal Planet, by holding my ground until the threat lins passed. Or two ignore the wisdom they so generously bestowed upon me, just to turn around and catch a glimpse of my killer, before I give in to the urge to flee and maybe make it to the shore before im übble.

Suddenly, a streak of golden fur stretches over

lose enough to have me swallowing my tongue.

Oh my God it's a fucking mountain lion.

rainbow and then lands gracefully upon a large dry boulder. This time the growl

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,551 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-One QUINN

When Thunsons and I arrive at Dobson's cabin, the first thing that I notice is the sweet smell of sugared Blac. It's faint, just a whisper in the air, but the scent is so deliciously tempting that I find myself trotting through the busted doorway of the cabin in search of its source. The place is completely empty, save for a few cans of soup and an assortment of tools. Following the shadow of an aroma that has suddenly grabbed a hold of my balls, I find myself in the middle of the foam with my nose to a moldy old couch. My eyes catch on a bright yellow scarf that peeks between the cushions and I drag it out with my teeth. Nestling my muzzle into the soft fabric for a moment, I realize this scarf belongs to Lilac. Whoever she is. The odd desire to take the thing with me has my ears twitching that I ball the damn thing up anyway and tuck it behind my jowls. Timmons lies into the spice in his human form, his eyes dark with disappointment.

"It looks like they skipped already," Timmons says, stepping toward a discarded pair of night goggles and a radial listening device. "There are a good amount of traps around the place, but they've all been spru

I shift into myself, my brows furrowing and I reroll the scarf and tuck it under my arm. "That's weird," I supply, ducking outside as my senses fire on the familiar scent of my blood.

I walk into the trees and right away I see it. A large double spring steel bear trap that is fairly coated in my blood.

"Jesus, Timmons gasps. "Guess that's one mystery solved. We must have been out here last night. Probably around the same time Gayle

was.

I nod, leaning down to finger the jagged steel teeth! Poachers and hunters don't just up and leave this kind of equipment. It's not cheap and judging by the state of this cabin, these guys aren't rich. They'll be back. I'll bet my next blow job on it.

"I'd almost take that bet if I didn't know you were talking about the one that divorcee cougar gives you every Friday."

I flip him off, smirking as I stand up and prepare to shift. "That cougar you're talking about, can make taking a whole dick look like a magic trick, and sing a song while she's at it."

Timmons cracks up as the two of us shift and race into the thick of the woods heading for Port Orchard at about fifty miles per hour. To some that might not seem very fast, but try moving at that speed in a forest dense with trees and brambles. I can promise it will feel a whole lot quicker once you're weaving and dodging and scouring the forest floor for evil steel teeth.

Right at the point we would normally cut left, the scent of sugared lilac wafts toward me and I slow my steps. Creeping low, behind a few bushes, I wait for Timmons to catch up before I slink toward the open dirt road. My eyes catch on someone hiking toward the creek. I race through the trees, passing the stranger so that I can get a good look at Lilac as she comes up on the downgrade of the hill. The moment I pause between two evergreens and still myself to observe her, she freezes.

Huh. Weird. She shouldn't have been able to see me. I was moving fast and low. Maybe she heard me....

Turning in a slow circle, she scans the woods warily. I study her face as she does this, keeping low to the ground just in case she pulls a weapon. But from what I can tell, she's clean. Not even a hint of gunpowder on her. Weirdly enough, she doesn't look scared as she surveys the woods, but thoughtful. Like she is trying to figure something out. Or maybe... she's wondering what is stalking her and planning a better layout for her traps. Suddenly, she stills, her body turned in my direction. Raising my head and creeping in closer, I align myself with an older fir. Its trunk and my coat are nearly a dead match and I know she would have to be a Shifter to spot me.

Right then, I get my first real look at her and although this might seem weird, my dick goes rock hard. And yes... I mean that dick. The overgrown tree branch, currently located between my hind legs. My fangs tingle and heat flashes across my chest as the wildly exotic, hazel blue of her eyes reflect a thin sliver of sunlight that filters in with the breeze. Her gaze is arresting in the most hypnotic way, her irises shining like twin blue gems, studded with tiny opalescent fragments of green and gold. I'm completely fixated on her, walking my eyes over her petite, yet wildly curvaceous form while my tongue drops halfway out of my mouth and I pant for air. An unintentional growl rumbles through me, almost like a reflex, when she suddenly turn back around and her hair shimmers around her like flames of a wildfire. The long, fine tresses flow down her back in waves of gold and red, bouncing with volume as she resumes walking again

Shit. If that's what the poachers are looking like these days, I may as well that planning my capture now. I'm not opposed to chains if she's the

1/2

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-One

one pulling them.

With an exasperated sigh. I let myself down gently. I am as likely in tap that, as 1 am to tap Old Bob from the docks Pocher females definitely fall into the category of NO WAY NEVER. Even for non discriminating shuts like myself

Turning away from her and stalking toward Timmons, I bid my lovely tac a silent farewell. That's when she decides to speak to me and both Timmons and I now stand routed to the forest floor.

k this way or not, but if I do, I'll be sure to pick up some perside and

Tm heading into town Wolfie! Not sure if 111 be coming back handages to tend to your paw!"

Peroxide and bandages? For me? She knows about

POY

y hurt pow

at least, she thinks she does.

But how? And why would she want to tend to me if she is the one who caught me? Unless... she wasn't the one that caught me. Gayle did say that it was two males and a girl. Maybe it's only the men that are the poachers and Lilac is only along for the ride. Maybe... she's dating one of them. Or...both of them.

No. Stop it. Reach up into the clouds and drag yourself back down here to Earth.

Still unable to head toward home without figuring out a little more about Miss Lilac, I lead Timmons toward the creek. This time keeping far enough away from her that we can avoid any chance of her hearing or seeing us. As we crest over the bottom of the hall, my mind wanders back to a couple of hours ago. When the twelve of us first came out of the forced shift and a gaping hole seemed to be carved right into my heart. I told everyone that I felt strange, like I was missing something. Maybe what happened with Lilac last night was the cause of it, or maybe it was something else.

There is only o

one way to find out and I am going to do so. Whether Lilac is a poacher or not.

Once we reach the creek, Timmons and I dip behind a couple of boulders that mark the northern fork of the stream and keep out of sight as we listen to the fiery female attempt to take a shortcut across the shallows. I don't notice anyone else at first, although I most certainly should have. Maybe I'm still in a sort of deep seated trance, brought on by discovering that poacher DOES NOT mean troll. Or maybe the constant churn of the rapids cloaked the sound of soft padded footsteps. Whatever the cause I had no idea that Gayle was even among until I heard her angry snarl of warning, followed by the predatory rumble of her attack growl.

Fuck! What the hell is Gayle doing?

She probably wants revenge. If it were any other scenario, I wouldn't worry, But Gayle and Gryffin lost their mother to poachers years ago and everytime they show up, one or two go missing. Shit! I can't leap over to save her as my wolf if I do, there are no guarantees that Gayle will stand down. BIL...

Shifting into my naked self, I face Timmons. "Go and get Goose!"

Timmons disappears into the trees across the creek and I hop over the boulders to land in a four foot pool of water, directly behind Lilac.

Aside from the sudden feline aggravation that etches across Gayle's face, and the bone shattering scream that erupts from Lilac as she is doused with a splash of ice cold rapids - I'm thinking my day is off to a good start. Because, not only am I being forced to step in and save the little red hunter, but I get to play the hero in my all time favorite outfit with my Louisville Slugger on full display.

Chapter Comments

Marietta Gary

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,657 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Two Author's Note

While writing this chapter, an old elementary school rhyme began to chime through my head and I thought to just leave it here for you all. It will make more sense as you read... It goes: "Men are from Mars mad Women from Jupiter. Men go to Mars to get more stupider"

Enjoy!

DOMONIC

Leaping over the side wall into my backyard I skid to a stop just outside the kitchen window. That smell is here again. The scent of a foreign wolf, but not the same one as before. This wolf is different and I can't shake the feeling that I have scented him before, just not in my yard. Somewhere else, maybe?

I do a lap around the property, growling when I scent three more by the front gate. Taedora's words from earlier ring through my head and I absently gaze over at her

bike, my ears twitching as I concentrate on-the sounds coming from inside the house. She said she met somebody here last night. She must have meant these wolves,

Draven's musical laughter floats toward me and I hurry toward my shorts stash behind the guesthouse. It's strange that I always seem to miss her almost desperately after a forced shift. I wonder if it's normal or if it's just me, because my dad never complained about experiencing such a thing. But maybe he just didn't because he knew back then that we decided to remain mateless. Now that I think about it, there might be a lot of things he failed to mention because of our rules.

Shifting and pulling on my trusty white gym trunks, I stalk toward the backdoor and step into the kitchen. There are three giddy women standing around the kitchen island and the only one who doesn't look surprised to see me is the cat. Flipping her off, I head straightfor Draven who is scantily dressed in her signature booty shorts and a gray jersey crop top. As my eyes climb her legs my dick climbs my shorts. Her legs are so fucken perfect. By the time I make it to her I'm forced to yank her up against me just to hide the firepower in my shorts.

"Baby," I murmur, sinking my tongue behind her lips as I press her back into the counter. Grinding my hips against her gently, I let her feel the extent of the elephant in the room. She chuckles into my mouth before pulling her away and mouthing, "Not now."

I glare at her, sliding my hands behind her and squeezing her ass as I thrust my hips forward again. This time I do it like I mean it, good and hard, which does not go unnoticed. "Oh for fuck's sake," Taedora snarls behind me while the other chick starts laughing. 1

so... if you don't mind."

I still haven't I picked up any earplugs yet homies,

But I do mind Meowmix," I grow out, smiling wide at my baby, who for some reason keeps lifting her coffee mug in my face. "Baby, can you stop that please. I want to kiss my girl Again she lifts the mug, this time pushing it right up against my eyes. "Wake up Domonic," she taunts me. "What do you see?"

"I can't see! Because you keep putting that fucken cup in my face," I stop, releasing her and turning around to face the trespassers. My eves float from one to the next, in equal measure as 1 glare. But it settles on the new girl and right away my eyes go for her mark. What the hack? I chuckle to myself. "There are more hickeys on her neck than she has hair on her head.

This must be Felix. Rainier's Felix. He must have panicked and tried to disguise the mark from her by destroying her neck.

Taedoras eyes narrow,

her gaze flicking down to the front of my shorts and then up again. "Really? Have

e you no shame?"

I chuckle, "Absolutely none." Then I wink at her and do a three hundred sixty degree turn. Making sure that these visitors can fully appreciate the size of my dilemma. 'Do you have any shame? Have I not provided you with your very own walls, Heathcliff? Do you ever 1/4

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Two

Taedora's smile widens. "Nopel"

"Is that like a werewolf thing?" Felix asks and my muscles tense. "Do

"No!" Taedora says, giving me the stink eye. "That is most certainly a 10monic thing."

"No," Felix giggles. "I mean the... the uh... the..."

"Size?" Draven supplies and I suddenly want to spank my lovely, dark haired maiden. Shit. Don't picture it, whatever you do. Your dick is already threatening the locals,

I turn back around and shoot Draven a questioning look. She nods, he knows. I told her last night after something... out of the ordinary happened at the bar."

I love how she already knew what I wanted to ask

That reminds me, I need to watch last night's recording. "Baby, where did I leave my phone?"

She doesn't answer, just shrugs then raises her cup again, blocking her face.

In a minute or so, I'm going to snatch that goddamned cup and throw it into the wall.

Walking around to the living room to check for my cell phone, I notice the lockbox on the wall. Suddenly everything else fades into the backdrop and I'm forced to suppress a growl.

That bay! That fucking boat

the

coffee table and a chair

rides up my

spine.

When the box first arrived the one thing I didn't tell braven, was that suspected whoever sent it, is the same person behind the messages and the ring. The fact that the other picture in the locket was of someone that she didn't know, was enough to tell me that they might have been forged. I knew she thought it came from her father and I didn't want to take that hope away from her, so I kept my suspicions to myself. Maybe that was a mistake. Maybe I should have simply laid out the facts for her.

It's highly unlikely that a human sent that box, because the only soul on it is a shifter. If it is real, and it did come from her father, then the chances of him being alive are incredibly slim. Because if there's one thing that I do know, it's that the phantom wolf that has been toying with my pack for the last five years does not leave loved ones alio.

That scent matches the wolf from the yard. He's the one that sent the locket. He was here! Five feet from my fucking girl and Taedora met

him. A wolf? She was bragging about meeting a wolf? Am I missing something??

3

The bastard that sent that locket here to torment my mate was in my fucking yard last night and I didn't even know it. There were four of them altogether! Draven could have been killed. My child could have been....

I shake off those thoughts, deciding to focus instead on the useless bodyguard lioness in my fucking kitchen. Anger begins to erupt inside me as I realize that neither Draven nor Taedora has even bothered to mention that our yard was infested with unknown wolves! Why not? There must be a reason. Taedora would not have kept them a secret from her.

A wild cyclone of fury starts to build inside of me and it's nearly impossible to control. Each of my muscles tense in a single progression and my fangs spear from my mouth. It's time for someone to tell me what the fuck is going on..

"So tell me," I call out over the mindless chatter of the females in the kitchen. "Who saw the wolves that came over last night? And why

arent they the very first thing that you mentioned when I walked in?"

Just like that all the talking

the talking stops and my anger only rises.

RAINIER

2/4

Chapter One Hundred Sorty Two

1 park nude the gate at track and take a few pUNIMAT

fucking g

"Frick, I curse at myself when did pre

Two more deep breathe and a sigh of resignation later, and tagging of the Taking a stay the to watch the grass

11 gre, I decide to give myself little pepat

"It's okay if the wants t

Ving to bring holy but su

ber and drag her

ass right the fuck back to me," I grin wickedly, my saps getting a bad boys. "When she truly realizes that she's literally bed to and there is no escape that senest case her pain, che il come around. And if the deut. I per just out the doren 17 Suddenly i vedla, a light both glowing now my baud like I last arad my seener

again and again until she does."

Before I can even knock Domonics onite carries in my direction. "Canal plan

With a sigh. I step through the doors and the sweet scent of strawber

ponch with pain. Right away my eyes found her. nd fuck the is beautiful the gleniems voor her shoot fighting like hell to keep my balls with my dick. She is sitting between Thedora and Dhawan them like some armory general.

"Raingert" She breathes out, jumping up so quickly that my heart clear

weetheart," I reply calmly, happy that I sounded like a fucking man just now.

When she starts to come in my direction, a shy smile spreads armes her lips, it's almost too good to be true.

And apparently it h

"Sit down!" Dotonic snaps and the freezes. "... down. We are not fired jet

wins a frown.

Who the fuck does he thinks talking to My muscles coil and anger ces through me, my fangs spearing out on reflex. I step forward angrily just as Felix gasps.

"Oh... wow," Folix startles, staring at my mouth

Oh Shit. Oops.

"I can explain," I say, retracting my fangs instantly.

"Not" Dominic says icily. "They are going to explain. Now sit the fuck down.

Feliz tosses my Alpha a frosty ass look and I can't help but smile,

Just sit Felix. Let the litt have his moment. Because I can't wait to hate mine," Draven says,

My eyebrows shoot up.

absurdity of this picture. Something wildly fucked up

p is going on

here.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,633 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Three DELILAH

My life hasn't been a very good one up until this point. I never realized just how empty and meaningless it was until today. There is no one in my life that I even care about, other than my ding dong brother,) mean, I used to love my mom with all of my heart and then some, but I suppose all children do at first. When you're small, you don't really know any better. Your love with your whole heart and simply assume that the feeling is mutual, And I guess, in some cases it might be. Well, at least I hope it is. But in my case, it wasn't. In my case... it was never going to be. It's kind of funny if you think about it. spent six years of my life in blissful ignorance after I was born, under the illusion that families love each other unconditionally. I spent the next six trying to make sense out of the way my parents treated me, Or rather, the way they did. My dad was alright most of the time. I'm even pretty sure that he actually did love me. But my mother? Oh... no.

That woman was - is - a cold piece of work, I was twelve when I started catching on to the little things she did to make me feel worthless. The lies she would whisper in my dad's ear. In Caned For a long time I thought I'd done something horrible to her, That I'd somehow made an unforgivable error that lund caused her to stop loving me. So naturally, I set out to fix it. Just to find out that my mother's distaste for me, it didn't stem from anything I did, It didn't even really have anything to do with we. It was all about her. I guess the first six years of my life fooled me into thinking that she care were simply peaceful because I didn't present a threat to her. I was her to make the other ladies in my dad's club jealous, Or when she needed me then she had to her chihuahua. Well, then again, I think she actually loved her dog.

about me and that she loved me. In actuality, those first six years laughter, I was new... I was her toy to play with when she needed cute kid on the Christmas card. She had no more attachmwot to

By the time I hit puberty and I started changing... so did she. I would get complimented on how pretty I was, or how amazing my eyes were and she always made sure that I knew that people only said those things to me because they felt bad for me. Because according to her. I was the exact opposite of beautiful and no one was ever going to truly love me. Her words, not mine.

You see, my mother loved herself above all else and she still does to this day. She was the Prom Queen and the town beauty. She married the most handsome guy in her high school and was the most coveted fe in town. With all of that you'd think she would be the picture of confidence. But no. She is not. She is jealous and hateful. She is Snow White's stepmother come to life.

It takes a long time to accept the truth about a person. To this day I still have a hard time believing that she truly doesn't care about me or my brother. But the proof is in the pudding and when my dad died... she even stopped referring to us as her kids. But enough of that, I'm over it. Cart you tell?

As I was saying before my rant... my life is empty and meaningless. And I only just realized this because the damn thing just flashed before my eyes. All thanks to an angry mountain lion.

My life was crap, and now it's over, I won't even get my

my Twinkies, Sob,

y eyes off this

My heart is beating so wildly that I'm pretty sure I could see it if I looked down at my chest, but I'm not going to take my beast until she rips them from my head.

The lion is crouching with its ears back and fangs showing. I'm pretty sure I read somewhere that it means the beast is about to pounce. I close my eyes, hoping that it might make this next part less scary, but I'm wrong.

When I hear a loud splash, I let out a scream to wake the dead and brace myself for claws across my chest and fangs along my jugular.

What

at I get

instead... is wet.

I'm freezing now and soaked from head to toe. Well, not completely soaked. It's just my back that's wet. When nothing attacks me, I open my eyes and nearly scream again. The lion is still there and it is... staring at me. No... it is staring at something behind me. Oh fuck. Please don't tell me there's another one.

Warm breath fans my neck and I swear my soul leaves my body as I surrender myself to the circle of life. I'm about to be eaten by two fucking lions and they better not waste a bite.

1/3

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Three

"Get behind me," the bringer of the breath says and I take use a minute to understand that there is a human at my back.

"Um..." I start. "Th-no, I don't think I can move."

A masculine chuckle sounds and my spine tingles as if hit with a live wire,

"Okay," the voice says. Then I'll get in front of you, but you have to close your eyes."

"What?" I snap. "Wh-why?" I ask as I begin shivering.

"Fine. Then don't."

My eyes are on the lion as this person steps around the side of me. The first thing I notice about him is how tall he is. The shadow of a six foot male falls upon the boulders right over my own. I am pretty short, only five feet and one point five inches. My brother always laughs when I add the point five because he thinks I'm being extra when I say it, but I'm not. I need every point five inches I can get.

The second thing I notice about this stranger is that he is completely and totally Adam and Eve naked. What the fuck kind of shit is this? Gasping in shock as he takes his place in front of me, my eyes roam the back of him like a bank robber that's just stepped into the vault. Heat begins to rise into my cheeks and suddenly I'm no longer shivering. This man... is oll man.

I've never ever in life seen a body like his in person. When I was a senior in high school, I took anatomy and I had to memorize all the different muscles of the human body. We even had live models that came in one day wearing only speedos and we were made to labul each of their muscles with markers. Those models were hot as hell and incredibly built, but they were nothing like the specimen standing between me and death.

I suddenly want a Sharpie pen and dry pair of panties. He would be so damn easy to label.

Two words. Gluteus Maximus.

That should be this guy's name, Maximus.

"Oh wow," I breathe out before I can stop myself.

An irritated snarl rips from the lion on the rock and I whimper, shrinking as much as I can behind Maximus large form. The lion hisses at him, suddenly restless as it paces back and forth using quick steps on the rock. I watch Maximus shake his head no, then wag his finger at the cat like he's reprimanding a toddler. The lion lets out a sound that is half bark and half meow before spinning in a circle on the rock, If I didn't know better, I would say this animal is having a tantrum and it is the strangest thing because Maximus is literally doing nothing but standing there. What the hell? Maybe he's a local and knows all the tricks of the trade. Or he's like a ranger, or a cat whisperer, or some type of Dr. Dolittle.

All of a sudden, a loud roar echoes through the trees and like a warning and it did not come from the lion on the rock. Holy shit bubbles. Right at that moment is when I decide that I am never going back to that cabin in the woods ever again. Sony Wolfe Guess I won't be seeing you again. A strange wave of sadness washes over me with that thought, but I'm going to have to get over it. Because I never war to see a lion ever again.

A sharp growl rumbles from the lion's chest, then it hisses before leaping from the boulder to disappear into the woods.

Talmost fall back into the water, I am so relieved.

"Oh my God!" I gush, wasting no time darting past Maximus and onto the shore on the other side of the creek. I bend over and take a few deep breaths. My heartrate is still way too high for my liking and I need to calm down.

"I'm guessing you're not from around here," Maximus says, the thick, corded muscles of his calves coming into view.

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Three

W.. those are nice.

And I'm guessing you are, I reply.

I straighten up slowly, following the line muscles above his knee as I stand. From his rectus femoris to his vastus lateralis to his sartorius, each one of them flexing beneath the confines of his lightly tanned skin. My oh my he must have some power in his legs. And that's when I catch sight of penis.

Oh shit! That's right, naked means naked!

Chapter Comments

Visitor

love this chapter!

Marietta Gary

Yup, naked usually does mean naked, as in the absence of ALL clothing.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,698 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Four

DELILAH

His penis - If it can even be called a penis, because his is much bigger than a penis should tapping me on my head as I stand.

"Oh my God!" I shout, snapping my eyes shut before I can even see his Eee. "Why are you naked?"

He laughs and once again the sound of it does something to me. I can skin. It's almost as if he's familiar somehow. Like I should know him....

gles rising up my center, like energy prickling amer

mw I don't

"Yeah-uh-sorry about the nudity. I was upstreams with a friend and we wanted to take a quick dip in the water. I put my clothes on a rock and the next thing you know, they were gone. I must have lost them to the rapids."

"Oh," I say. Makes sense. "Um - I would like to look you in the eyes when I say thank you, but....."

"Give me a second," he says and then I hear his feet patter across the ground away from me.

I peek, of course I do, and it is probably a mistake, because now I can see the tribal tattoos that wind up both of his upper arms and the way his ass muscles shift with each step. I am clenching my hoo-haw and I am not ashamed. Instantly, I am picturing what his M would look like doing other things besides walking. You know, like between my legs kinds of things. The image of it, especially when I toss myself in the picture as a prop, has me biting my lip and humming a moun. He steps into the general store with no hesitation at all and my first thought is that this is not the first time he's done this. I still don't really know what he looks like yet, so I should probably back a notch. Very rarely do you come across a full-blooded Adonis. Most of the time those who are blessed with a body like his, carry the burden of our sins in the face. Not that I'm terribly superficial, but you know how it is. You can't have it all... Seeing that he is definitely equipped with everything God intended a man to have in order to super populate the Earth, my guess is he's sporting a mug that only mother could love. So when he steps back out of the store in a pair of black trunks and sneakers, I almost don't want to look up. But... I

do it anyway.

And Sweet Baby Jesus... He's full-blooded after all. Take that, man! Eicorns do exist.

My mouth falls open in shock as I try to accept the injustice of his perfect features. His clean cut brown hair somehow looks naturally spiked and playful. I instantly want to run my fingers over the top of his head to see if the strands bounce back or lay flat. Moving lower, the high arches of his eyebrows alone make him look like trouble. Then there's the slightly exotic tilt of his eyes, that are so light of a brown they are damn near yellow and the crescents of his OMG' long, thick eyelashes that hover low enough to make him look sleepy. His straight, perfectly sculpted nose sits at a ninety degree angle from the top of his full, yet slightly pouty lips. And of course, there's his jawline, that is so chiseled and so squared you can see the muscles working just below his cheekbones.

He has the face of an angel... or... a devil

There's no way that he's not taken already. Damn it,

I'm hot. I think I'm getting really, really hot. Maybe I should take another dip in the water.

"There we go," he says with a quick smile. "I'm ready for you now.

Excuse me? "Ahern"-I cough "what?" I think I just fried my brain by attempting to count his abdominal muscles. For sure they can't be real.

His lip twists upward in a half smile and now I'm leaning toward face of a devil. "You said you wanted to look into my eyes and thank me

"Right!" I say with a frog in my throat, my eyes hugging from the sound. The fuck? I'm trying to meet his state, but my gane keeps slipping downward and over the exquisitely smooth skin of his powerfully built chest. I follow the wind of tribal markings from his deliciously curved biceps on each side to where they end in a decorative vee just jer his collar bone. Knowing that he is still waiting for my thank you while I ogle him, I say, "I like your tattoos. Very... interesting. Very interesting? Really*"

1/3

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Four

You can touch them, if you want, he offers, his glowing eyes shifting Back and forth over my face.

Flames. Burning Bre roasts across my cheekbones and I am tempted to art coughing just to disguise how red I must be. Shake thu vi What in the monil hell is wrong with you? to get your damn binkles! "T...um..." up, up, up, my eyes lift and I say thank you for what you did. For saving me. I'm pretty sure if you hadn't been there, I wouldn't be here."

"Your welcome," he replies, his eyes traveling over my ugly, boyish, out that I would not have worn if I'd known what kind of pth swath in the creek.

I've got a long walk ahead of me, so I guess I better get going." I say styly, forcing my legs to work and stepping in the direction of the store. God: What the hell? Something in me is screaming in protest as walk past him and toward my Twinkies. It feels like a physical puti on the base of my throat, warning me that if I walk away from him now that I will dream about him until the day that I die and never will I find him again. Stop it, bratul Don't be so dramatic.

"Wait a minute, Lilac, his boyishly masculine voice reaches out like a to, jerking me to a stop.

Lilac? What?

I turn around to see him walking toward me, his hand going over the back of his neck like he's not sure what he wants to say. The fired muscles of his arm as it bends, milking my honey like a bee charmer would at the fair. Lord, I might have one thing. "My n

name is Delilah," I i retort. "Not sure where you got Lilac from."

He grins, stopping eight inches from me and forcing me to crack my neck toward the heavens just to look into his eyes. "Lilac... Delilah Same thing," he quips.

It's totally not.

"Okay, Maximus," I tease, smiling when his eyebrows snake into the limbo. "What's on your mind?"

He loses his smile, the gold of his eyes suddenly swirling with intensity "You said you have a long walk ahead of you." I nod as he goes on, "Well, I don't know where you're headed, but a walk in any direction from Blackjack Creek is probably not safe for a girl like you. As you already know, there are lions on this mountain. And there are wolves." Wolves. Yes, I know. My face pinches. That's right. There are lions. Lions, that I'm sure I can't outrun. Well, fuck. "Shit," I snap. "You're totally right, and just so that you're aware, it would have eventually occurred to me. Just not until it was too late to turn back." I clamp my eyes shut for a moment to school my anger. Then I open them to send my brother, yet another, hate-text.

When I look up again he's eyeing me suspiciously. "Someone coming to pick you up?" His words are carefully clipped and just on the edge of being hostile.

I shake my head. "No, I wish." Then with another thankful smile, I wave goodbye and start to back toward the store. "Guess I'll have to spend the money for a cab."

Where are you trying to get to?"

I pause just outside the store entrance. "A little town on the beach called Port Orchard. I refuse to stay in that joke of a cabin for even one more night."

He smirks, stalking forward as he checks me out. His gaze crawls over me in a slow, intentional perusal, as if he wants me to see him doing it. Or like he's trying to prolong our time together.

Okay, maybe he's not taken.

Or maybe he's just a shut. I mean, he did arrive in the nude.

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Four

His eyes catch on the curve of thy hips and I hide a smalle, at my ego absolute best feature. Most everyone in my home town has called mé breasts, they're on the lighter side of a G-eup, but my hips are honela the back of them.

to a full charge from the heat in his gaze. My hips are my alca Rabbit at one fire or another. I don't have the largest

I ke ridiculously curved- and my ass is the pretty round plum in

"You won't get a cab out here for at least an hour, he informs me, his ghze lifting slowly away from my hips to meet my eyes. "I live in Port Orchard. Let me give you a ride,"

Please! You can give me any ride that you like. But what I say is, "T-um-I don't know you." Stupid bitch? Of course you know About He just saved you from Mufasa's crazy cousin! lie's the devil angel with the big thick and the dreamy eyes. Hello!

The glow of his irises dulls slightly and his breath hitches. Blinking at he, his face is suddenly vulnerable, as if he expects that I'm going to say no and he's disappointed.

I don't know why I'm hesitating. It's probably just my baale programming causing problems as usual. That whole never accept rides from strangers that's been coded into my brain telling me he could be a paycho ora.mpist. But it's like they say, 'pachos are only crazy to some people and you can't rape the willing... so... "Okay," I relent with a sigh. That sounds'-1 pauth; watching his face light up-"perfect."

Chapter Comments

Marietta Gary

Jaylee, Delilah sounds like my kind of people. Delilah (Lilac, same thing) seems like someone I would hang with, we have the same personalities (thank God we didn't hav...

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,914 words]

The Pack: Rule Number 1 - No Mates. Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Five DELILAH

Sitting in a brand new Jeep with Maximus we pass a signs that reads Moje Leaving Blackjack and I let loose with a sigh of relief. We haven't been riding long, just a few

minutes, but just the confirmation that we the leaving the place is enough to soothe my nerves.

With half a Twinkie in my mouth, I study the man behind the wheel as he drives. He's still shirtless, despite that he snagged this jeep from whomever it is that runs those cabins on the posh side of the creek. Why couldn't they provide him with a shirt too, I wonder.... Taking another bite of my Twinkie, I marvel at how much bigger he looks now that I'm sitting next to him. Maybe he lifts weights or something, because he is bulked with muscle everywhere I look. His neck, his arms, his back, his chest, his Admh nether regions, his gluteus maximus. It's unreal and more than a little intimidating. A guy like him is gonna have a smoking hot girl somewhere. Even if he acts like he doesn't. With every little move he makes, I watch his strength ripple beneath his skin. He is a testament to the human body and what it can be.

I really should ask his name, what with getting a ride from him and all It would be wrong not to know who murdered me if that's his angle. Really? So he saved you just to off you later? I roll my eyes at myself and turn to gaze out the window, watching the miles and miles of evergreens as we pass them. Jesus. And I thought I was gonna work 772 HAHAHA!

Turning away from the window, I catch him looking at me, before he quickly jerks his eyes back to the road. Almost like he's embarrassed... Yeah right. He was just swimming in the creek naked. I'm re he's REAL shy. Maybe there's something on my face or something Shit! I whip down the visor and check myself in the mirror. Huh. Nope Nothing. Snapping it back up, I catch him looking again and then jerking away agale and now I just can't let it go. So, I turn in my seat to face the side of him and decide to watch him while I eat my last Twinkie.

My eyes stay glued to his profile, too afraid to venture any lower lest I start panting. So I use this little exercise to inspect his face for imperfections. Whenever I start digging on a dude that I know is way out of my league, the only way for me to un-crush myself is to End something on him that's defective and blow it up to a thousand in my mind. It can be anything, an uneven ear, a fat mole hidden under the chin, short arms, too long legs. whatever it may be. I take it and I trump it up until it's all I can see and then voila, just like that I'm cured.

Maximus has to have at least one flaw. Right? Right. Most people do. Except, on him, I can't seem to find any. Not a one. If I've succeeded in doing anything at all, it's look like a weirdo. "Are you going to finish that?" he asks me suddenly.

My brow wrinkles. Finish what? "Oh!" I chirp, lifting my little vanilla creme cake to the front of his mouth, careful not to block his vision. "You mean this? You mean my Twinkie?" I tease.

An amused smile stretches across his face and I swear my heart stutters As I begin to pull my hand back, his mouth juts forward and he takes a large bite. His teeth, followed

by his pillow soft lips graze my fingers gently, I gasp at the warm energy that fires up my arm Taking my Twinkie back swiftly, I pop the last of it in my mouth. "Thief" I spit playfully.

He grins deviously, "You're the one who put it in front of my mouth. I thought you wanted me to taste your cream cake. Biting his lip, he glances down at my lap, then raises his eyes to mine suggestively.

My entire body boils and I smile coyly. Now I'm seeing him with his head between my thighs and I can almost feel his lips there. Fuck A blush is burning its way across my flesh and I can feel the tingling of my lady parts as they ignite. Now, I am forced to face the front so that I can squeeze my thighs together and concentrate on keeping the seat dry. It would devastate me if I got out of the car and left a Juicy little butterfly spread on the leather.

"Damn," Maximus says, sucking in a sharp breath before he suddenly jerks the steering wheel. The tires squeal as the vehicle sways left then right and he loses control. I throw my arms out clutching both sides of the vehicle as if somehow I can stop it from swerving. This is it. This is how he kills me! I watch his whole body tense and his knuckles whiten over the steering wheel as he works to bring the jeep back under control. Finally, after what feels like ten years of almost dying, he rights the Jeep. We had been going too fast and almost want to slap him.

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Five

Taking a few deep breaths I lean over and peek at the speedometer, nodding happily when I see that he has slowed down by twenty miles per hour

He laughs, side eyeing me. "Sorry about that. I was... distracted. You can relax now."

"Right," I agree, still tense.

He chuckles, "As much as I'm enjoying your hand on me, If you don't remove it soon, I'm going to have to pull over and get naked again." "What?" I snap. "Why?" "My hand?"

And then I notice it. I've got one hand clutching the door on my right, and the other clutching his thigh on my left. Oh... no... But at the same time oh... yes....

Slowly, I relax my grip on his leg, shivering when he flexes his leg muscles against my palm and the front of his shorts twitch in my direction.

side a thing.

Oh man, those shorts don't hide a

Taking my hand back, I promise to beat myself when I'm alone. T-uh-sorry, I mumble stupidly.

"I'm not," he says so quietly I wonder if he meant for me to hear it.

can still feel the rippling of his thigh muscles in my hand and I swallow a moan. How long has it been since I got laid again? I snic as if that matters. Maximus is the type that probably collects wet panties like baseball cards. Hatching butterflies wherever he goes. An entire book on his mantle called Panties From Across the Globe

With a quick shake of my head, I try to knock my brain back into place, My mother's words come slamming home as I recall the night of my first school dance as a freshman. My date was a junior and the captain of the basketball team and when we were about to leave the house, my mother whispered to me, Tie's way too hot for you and you know it. Don't embarrass yourself, Delilah."

I think of those words and readjust myself. This guy, he's just a big flirt Like mama said, "What a man can have he will take. That doesn't make you special"

"We're almost there," he says, as we reach the bottom of the mountain and the heavily wooded highway, then make a right. "Where were you headed?"

Shit! That's right! "Um..." I start, feeling slightly embarrassed that I have yet to decide where to stay. I don't have much money anyway. I can probably only afford a couple of nights somewhere cheap. "The most affordable motel is fine, please." "The most affordable? You mean the cheapest?" he inquires thoughtfully

"Yes," I say, forcing a smile as I pretend not to notice the pitiful look he's giving me.

"Okay," he says and I notice him slowing down again as we approach some cut off road at the top of hill. "So what are your plans while you're here?"

"What does it matter?" I snap waspishly, before I can stop myself. Shit's not his fault he's too good for me. I peek over at him, wanting to apologize, but not knowing how.

He watches the road intensely as we make our way downhill at a snail pace. "I don't know," he says with a quick glance in my direction. Tust thought, maybe... if you're not too busy, you might want to have dinner with me."

"Dinner?" I say, like I have no idea what it is.

"That comes after lunch," he teases.

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Five

I glare at him, turning my entire body his way and noticing for the first time that the road we are on borders the shore. The ocean in its vastness lay just beyond this street. My glare dissipates, melting into a smile as I admire the beauty of it. Houses come into view, lining the forside of the road and for a moment I'm bubbling with envy. Their backyard is the damn Pacific Ocean.

"Lilac?" Maximus prompts me.

"Delilah!" I flinch, then realize I never answered him about dinner. "Oh! Sorry! I was... admiring the ocean."

He grins, lifting an eyebrow my way. "Oh really... you like the ocean?"

"Love it," I say with one hundred percent seriousness.

He doesn't lose his smirk, gazing at me as he suddenly cuts left into a sleep, nearly hidden driveway that ends in front of one of the houses I was admiring. Parking the car, he turns my way, but he doesn't say a word, simply stares at me.

"Um..." I start, watching the front door of what appears to be a modern glass house. "What are we doing here?"

"Don't you want to see the ocean?" he asks.

I chortle, "Yeah! But I do not want to get arrested doing it! Somebody lives here!"

He grins, "Yeah. I know, crazy isn't it? If you get out and look through the front window, you can see through to the ocean on the other

I nod slowly, wondering if maybe I was right to be wary of him. Perhaps he is nuts after all. "That's great, but I'm not going to do that." Almost in a panic, I notice the vehicles parked in the shaded carport on the side of the house. There are two of them. A yellow Camaro and black Escalade. These people are home! "You're not understanding me, Maximus!"

"My name is Quinn,"

"Yeah, okay!

brother.

But Quinn, this

s is somebody's house! We can't just park here!" I inform him in the same voice I use when I scold my idiot

"Yes, we can," he says, eyeing me as he unbuckles his seatbelt and attempts to get out of the car. I snatch his bicep with one hand to stop him and sparks fine like tiny rockets all the way up my arm. I gasp from the shock of it, then hum with pleasure as he flexes under my palm. His eyes freeze on my hand and I swear I hear him groan, a low hazy rumble.

As I take my hand back, his eyes follow, his chest heaving slightly before he turns away. "We can't be here," I say again.

"We can be here," he says again and for the first time I hear anger in his voice. "Because this is my

house."

Chapter Comments

Karolina Kowalczyk

where did he get a car, wasn't he shifted last night?

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[2,192 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Six RAINIER

After Demonic finished laying out what sounded to me like a very solid complaint, he turned to Taedora and waited. And... walled.

She shrugged at him, "What do you want me to say? Check the camera buddy. And you will see how lazy I was about protecting Draven. You might see some other stuff too."

"Yes," Draven says. "After you've watched it, then we'll put your little theory about my locket to the test, huh? Since, as you said, I'm too emotional to think rationally about it. I obviously don't have a clue. In fact I probably wouldn't know the truth, if it was on my finger!" The girls all laugh hysterically and I'm more confused than ever.

"Baby, that's not what I said, I just don't want you to get your hopes up is all," Domonic says defensively. "I just don't think you-

Watch it! Until you do, I don't want to hear another word."

"No, Domonic! Watch the fucking tape. Watch

"Baby...he trails off, crouching down in front of her, and messing with his phone.

It's on the tip of my tongue to ask if the ladies are dismissed, because I've been in limbo until I get Felix alone, but that's when I notice the girls acting strangely.

First, the three females on the couch don't seem at all alarmed about the wolves Domonic mentioned. None of them seems to care. In

fact, all three are brazenly ignoring him as they make a pretty ridiculous show of examining their nails. They look like mimes, copying one another's movements as Domonic's knuckles whiten on his phone in anger. I assume, whatever is on the tape is the cause. Does he realize there's audio? I don't hear anything, so I assume he has yet to work it out. Could he be drunk?

T

I turn my attention back to the girls who are still doing ridiculous shit while they wait for my Alpha's next move. Even Felix is doing it and that fact makes me smile. She's getting along with them. Good. Maybe she'll like it here more if she has friends and she'll stay. She did seem happy to see me so...

Something twinkles in the light as the ladies raise their left hands, catching my eye.

Domonic growls, standing up. "Who the fuck is this guy?" he asks. That's not a wolf."

Everybody ignores him, even me, as I step closer to the couch and watch the next time they raise their hands. There it is! Draven is

wearing a ring. Could it be the ring?

"Is that what I think it is?" I ask and each of the girls smile.

"Finally! Someone who isn't blind!" Draven says happily. She leapt from the couch, heading my way. That's why you're a cop and Domonic is a fool."

You mean, he hasn't-

She shakes her head, putting her finger to her lips. "I want to see how long it takes him."

I cringe, wanting to laugh because I know the longer it takes him to notice, the more groveling he'll have to do. "But how did you get it?" I mouth the words

She mouths back, "Angle."

I tense, shaking my head in anger when I realize that she had it all along and I never even asked her about it. "That bitch."

1/4

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Six

Draven alongs. "Talon't really blame her for taking it," she says. "She thought you bought it for one of your 'whores. If Domonic bought

faf take I. Chee hundred percent. But... there's something else too. Something I didn't tell you guys."

My eyes nettem, "Like what?"

ding about? The one that you met? I hear Domanie asking in the background.

"That's your phantom! I can't say anymore than that. It's Draven's story to tell. Thedora says to Domonic, chuckling as she heads for the front door. "I have to go check on some things at home! Goose just texted me and said that Gayle tried to attack one of the hunters in the middle of the creek." "Wait just a second, Simba, Damsonic protests, pocketing his phone.

She turns around with her hand on the door, her eyes withering. "Yes?

"Good job," he says with a smirk. "Even if he did get the drop on you."

"Ha! Tardora flips him off. "I be back ladiest Felix, tonight is Mucho Margaritas at the bar!" Then she leaves.

Tight. God, does that mean she's staying.

I watch Felix as Domonic heads our way. A moment ago, she was a bundle of confidence, and now she looks unsure. Nervous

"Baby," Domonic says. "Who was the guy on the tape?"

Draver smiles, putting her left hand under her chin playfully, her ring glinting in the light. "You heard what Thedora said. It's my story to tell and I'm not going to tell it until you stop obsessing and notice me!

T

"I got a text from Benjamin," I say, gaining everyone's attention, including Felixs. She's frowning for some reason and that's when I notice the bruise on her forehead "What the fuck? I snap, charging for the couch, then jumping over the back of it to sit next to Felix.. "What about Benjamin?" Draven asks.

"What?" I ask distractedly.

Draven smiles. "Benjamin?"

"Oh! Right," I say, still studying Felix's wound. "My dad. He escaped."

"What?" Draven and Domonie say at the

same time and I nod.

"I thought we could call Old Ben during the meeting and find out what went down when we're all together," I reply.

"Oh, you guys are having a meeting today, huh?" Draven says. "Well, I think it's about time I start attending. In fact, so should Emily. And so should Felix."

My heart thumps with hope that I'm not even sure it's safe to have. Because the sorrowful look on Felix's face says it's not looking good.

"Fine," Domonic agrees. "Now will you tell me who the fuck that was outside last night?"

"Why don't you play the audio this time," Draven stage whispers before prancing up the stairs toward their room.

Domonic growls, bypassing the stairs altogether and jumping for the landing to throw himself onto the second floor landing. He ends up right behind her and the two disappear into the bedroom laughing.

2/4

Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Six

Standing up, I reach for her hand, hoping to God she takes it.

Esparks of warmth travel spiny

Stær remains quiet as

and walk hand in hand to the front. That's when I notice Hector's car parked at the curb a house

What the fuck

Is that Caddy doing here?!

Telis shrugs, taking her hand back and I immediately miss her touch. drove it here last night after Antman showed up at the bar.

"What?" I snap, my eyes going for her head. "Is that what happened to you? Is that why you're all bruised up?"

be mods, biting her lip and making me want to kiss the

"After Draven and Talora left, I heard a wolf howl and I went outside hoping

That you might see one, I finish for her and she nods. My heart skips as I remember her craning her neck to

When she called me her guardian.

search for me that night 1

He was in Hector's car when I noticed him and I didn't think he saw me, so I tried to sneak back in the bar but her voice cracks-"I didn't make it. He slumped my head int

I'm full of rage now. Wanting more than anything to find the bastard and show him what a real monster can do,

He was going to take she whimpers, as she starts to cry. "He dragged me to the car and pulled a gun."

My fists clench, anger rising in me, but then I realize. She drove the car here. So, she must have gotten away from him somehow.

"I didn't w-want to go," she continu

My arms ache to hold her right at this moment, but I don't want to risk having her push me away. So, I simply nod.

"I just wanted y-you," she whimpers and I melt.

Fuck it. I yank her against me, pushing her head into my chest. Then, when her arms go around my waist, my chest trembles with relief

"Okay," I say calmly, kissing the top of her head. "So, how did you get away?"

She shakes her head, still crying. We're both out in the open, so I lift her into my arms and place her in the front seat of my SUV, then turn her body to face me.

As she looks up, her electric blue eyes are red rimmed, and her lips swollen and pouty. Her tears have stopped flowing, and I wipe the rest with my fingers. Taking a deep breath to control my temper, I wait for her to speak. Really, I'm dying to smash something. Anything! Or maybe even rip a tree from the ground.

When she said she just wanted me, I was instantly reminded of my mother, I never stopped to think of how my dad must have felt after the fire and now... I wonder if he imagined her screaming for him. Knowing he had no way to protect her and knowing he was probably the last thing she thought of when she died.

Fick. Of course he went crazy. Because looking at Felix, I realize I am my father's son, just the loss of self-control I had when she told me to let her go... tells me he and I are more alike than I thought. Devastating pain grips me when I picture Felix in my mother's place and I have to shake the insanity away before it drops to my knees in agony.

3/4

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Six

Standing up, I reach for her hand, hoping God will take it.

She does and I suck in a sharp breath as the sparks of warmth travel up my arm.

She remains quiet as we exit the house and walk hand in hand to the front. That's when I notice Hector's car parked at the curb a house over. Why I didn't notice it before I'll never know.

"What the fuck is that Caddy doing here?" I ask.

Felix shrugs, taking her hand back and I immediately miss her touch. "I drove it here last night after Antman showed up at the bar."

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"Like I said," Felix goes on. "All I wanted was you"

Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Six

Stroking her legs with my hands as I give her my undivided attention, wry," I choke out

"Don't be," she says softly, laying her hands over mine. Because, right before he forced into the car, you showed up

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,452 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Seven

BAINTER

"What are you saying? I ask, reaching out to lift his chin and mindig lots stand heaven her kes

She smiles and my chest fotters. My gundian, the whispers, has eyedropping from my toy me and tacked om?

in

As I watch her, my mind reels, I think an Old foralling in on the shes the parking lot and the man he get dried

Inne she saw my Rings in the house. Does th

Thraven told you," I say as softly as I can. Not sure how I feel about that

She nods, and I regard her carefully. "She did."

She shrugs, I don't know how to answer that. Everything, I guess, and your pack and what you are. I probably about you if I hadn't already been thinking - well hoping that it could be true. "Hoping? I'm almost afraid to ask.

Yes." She blushes, biting her lip and making me want to kiss her. "When I woke up with your ripped neck, it was hard to explain away what I'd seen you do and thats when the fantasies started rolling i

"Fantasier, huh?" I Lick my lips thinking we should get to the bar so that we can play out a fe Yeah, don't you know? Werewolves are hot."

I laugh, stepping closer to her.

She also told me why you bit me. She says that I'm your mate and that when she cuts off, tears slipping from back a sob and her beautiful face pinkens. I reach out and take her hand, squeezing gently. "When I told you that you had panicked." She pauses, shedding a few tears and I nod, shaking off the memory of what I bit that morning. Her emotion when she speaks next. "She says that I'm the one you are meant to be with

"Yes. Did you get my note?" I ask gently.

"I did," she says. "I have it in my b

ack pocket and it makes way more sense

e now than it did at

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you about Angle, I know it hurt you to find out the way you did. But I was afraid that if I told you, you wouldn't

me a chance and I needed one."

She nods. "Draven said that you married that... woman because you never wanted to find your mate"

"Angle," I say, kneeling in front of her so that I can look up into her eyes. "Her name is Ang

*I know her name, I just don't want to say it, she snaps, rolling her eyes

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Seven

Choking, stretch forward, Teining my head against her shins. "I heard she showed up at the bar last night. Did she upset you?"

Fella strokes her fingers through it and I groan, loving her hands on me in any way.

Not as much as the pissed me off." Felix says. "She kept calling me a whore, that was about it."

(I'm angry. I get that Angle is upset, I do. But calling someone a whore that had no idea I was married is not fair. If anyone is the whore,

I'm sorry about that, sweetheart." I say, stroking my hands up and down her calves.

asks suddenly.

That you

nted to find me?"

whispers and I can hear her trying not to cry.

I leap to my feet and pull her toward me. "It's not the way that it sounds, but yeah. It's true, I never wanted to find my mate. But I didn't

"And then I show up." he sighs. "Ruining everything

"Hey! Not" I grab her head in both of my hands and lean in to kiss her. I didn't love Angie. I was never going to. She may not understand that now, but hopefully one day she will. What I did by marrying her while knowing I would never love her, was wrong. Now she has the chance to find someone who does. It was selfish of me to do that. So you ruined nothing."

"So then, when did you realize I was your mate?"

I grin, kissing her again, this time more intimately, I was watching a video of the shooting so that I could check out the guys I'd be looking for and I saw you on the tape. I didn't know you were my mate yet, but I probably should have. All I knew was that there was an extremely beautiful girl whose boyfriend shot up the club and I headed for you instead of him. But the moment I stepped onto your floor at the hospital, I scented you and as much as I always said I never wanted to find you, no one could have stopped me from walking into our rooms that day. I told myself I just had to see you. At least once."

So you knew right

asks, shocked. "Then you had me arrested. She frowns and I once again feel like an ass.

To be honest, I think I subconsciously was trying to keep you near me, Even though having you close only made me want you more. I

I couldn't help myself." I pull her out of the car and into my arms, holding her against me as I dip my nose into her hair. "It's true, I never wanted my mate. But I never wanted her because I was afraid of losing her. At the time, I thought I was being smart by marrying Angie. I thought if I already had a wife, that if my mate ever showed up, I could just walk away. But then, I met you and... I just couldn't. In fact, that night you told me that Antman would come for Hector and then for you. I uh- well..."

ar?" she pulls back, looking up at me.

1

I may or may not have chased him through the woods as something other than a human," I admit, squirting. "I looked at it as solidifying your freedom. And then of course I caught him and ripped him apart with my teeth. "Seriously? You chased dhim, as a wolf?"

Her eyes sparkle and the constriction around my heart eases a bit. "I had a dream about you and him in the woods. He was dead in my

dream

shrug. "Ya know, the woods can be a treacherous place. Anything might have happened to him."

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Seven

She giggles. "I would have loved to see that! Then with a suspicious smile, she adds, "You're the wolf I heard howding then, aren't you? That's why you came back with your buttons crooked. And to think I was all heartbroken because I thought you went out and busted) quickie with some chick."

"I know you did," I admit, placing her back in the car. "And I let you think that because I thought it was adorable."

She sticks her tongue out at me and I close the door. Once in the driver's seat, I start the car and decide to go ahead and pop a couple of questions. "So, I came to your rescue last night, huh? Was I the big hero?"

You don't remember?"

"No... it's a long story that I'll definitely tell you later. But two, none of us knows what we did last night."

That's crazy. But... you knew me. You tried to protect me."

I smile, pulling away from the curb to head for the bar. "I was hoping I would. I'm glad that I did."

Her eyes go dark for a moment. "Antman shot you six times," she shudders. "I thought you were going to die. You were hurt, and I threw myself over the top of you. When Antman tried to finish you off, that's when the rest of your pack appeared. They dragged him into the trees. It was actually pretty scary." Then she smiles as if something has just

occurred to her. "I'm free. I can go to bed in the middle of LA. and not have to worry about one of those bastards hunting me down."

"Well, I wouldn't say you were free. You're not..."

She quirks an eyebrow. "How do you figure?"

I have to laugh, letting my eyes roam over her body suggestively. "I mean... it's true... I still have to file for divorce, then find another house, then buy the perfect ring but... in the eyes of a Shifter, that mark on your neck says that you're already married, sweetheart. So no, you're not free. You're mine."

"Oh?" she teases.

"Ols," I say, losing my smile as we pull close to the bar to find Bart outside in front of a busted front window, "Shit. Did you lock the doors

when you left last night?"

She nods. "I set the automatic deadbolt like he showed me."

I roll down the window and pull up next to Bart. "Again?"

He nods. "Yup. Same old deal. Nothing taken, everything busted."

I turn to Felix, "Thank God you left last night"

"Is it safe to stay here?" she asks, shuddering.

"It will be. Because I'll be staying here with you."

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,250 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Eight DELILAH

is your house?" I ask, my mouth falling open in shock. Well of course it is. He has everything else, body, muscles, looks. Why wouldn't he have a house like this too?

"Yes," Quinn says. "And before you ask, I have a roommate. His name is Timmons. The Escalade is mine, the Camaro is his."

That's not what I was going to ask,' I say smartly, still feeling a bit intimidated. This guy has money. Like actual money. Places like this are never cheap. "I was going to ask, why you brought me here instead of the motel like you were supposed to." This is the kind of thing a psycho killer might do. Damn it, I never listen, do 17

He flinches, looking embarrassed for a moment, before leaning into the Jeep. "Oh! Um, sorry. I just thought-he eyes my wet clothes "maybe you wanted to see the beach and put on some dry clothes or something."

"Uh-huh," I say impishly. "That's it? See the beach and change? No funny stuff?"

He grins, his citrine eyes dropping over me suggestively. "Unless you want funny stuff. I mean, if that's what you're into, I'm sure we could work something out."

Despite the flash of awareness that fires my blood, I know better than to give it any attention. A guy that looks like he does, with a house on the hill overlooking the beach, is more than likely used to women throwing themselves at him. He probably saves girls all the time just to bring them home and fuck the gratitude out of them. Who knows? That might even be his gerdown.

Keep acting like you wouldn't love to fuck him. Hoe ahead-oops - go ahead. Shut up brain!

I'm good thanks," I say without thinking. "But I would like to change, if it's okay."

"Absolutely," Quinn says, and I swear I see real disappointment in his eyes.

I ignore it, grabbing my backpack, then getting out of the car to follow him inside. The place is clean for a Bachelor Pad. Aha! There you go assuming things again D! You don't even know for sure if he's single Giant windows everywhere. The front door opens into the living room, the kitchen and dining room are straight across from it, and next to each other. There are two hallways, one on each side of the living room, and a patio deck in the back with stairs that I can only assume lead to the beach. "Wow," I whisper, unable to keep it to myself. I'm dying to check out that patio, but first I want to change.

A guy with curly, brown hair and warm cinnamon colored eyes comes walking out of the hallway to my right. He's dressed in gym trunks and a tight t-shirt that shows off his muscles of which he has many, For the love of God. Seriously? He's not a bulky or as tall as Quinn, but he's definitely bigger than me and I'm suddenly feeling a bit more wary.

"What have we here?" The guy asks, meeting Quinn's eyes.

"This is Delilah," Quinn says with a smirk. "Delilah,

lah, this is my roommate Timmons."

"Hi," I say politely.

Timmons nods, not even granting me a smile, before he looks back at Quinn, a strange look passing between them. "Ill be in my room. We have that thing at twelve, remember?"

Quinn nods. "Of course." He turns to me. "Hallway the left, bathroom to the right."

I say nothing, leaving Quinn and his friend to their awkward silence as step into the hallway toward the single door on the right. There is a set of stairs next to it, that lead down into what appears to be a bedroom and once again the little green monster takes a bite out of 1/3

Chapter One Hundred sixty Eight

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y and Im atardly fealing

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Hey, de

Timmons remarks, rubbing his chin. "Did you entender any boter while you weew and there? Pouchers muryh

My draw together questioningly "The today, I say, and it's me less than Just an angry lion and a taked mant

Quinn hans amond, pes the say something, heat stops when he sewn in my jeans and body buzzing sorater. His eyes go straight my hit his propis smaller his ities. They cant cover only low freezing on the flesh of my exposed shoulders and neck. He cleg his that "Timmons is a sheriff's deputy, He's always on the Inket for information

1 cood

play it as d as I can, fed hemstly start shaking a hit. I close my eyes briefly, thinking of the girl Cane said they shot in the woods The lion gul, sh. What if she won't say offer off? What if when the rap from them, it was only to die later? My heather could be in a heap Virre very serious about gerecting the wildlife out here, Timmonsays, a little too intensely.

The wildlife? Cal. Not the man get Olay

utastic," I say. "I don't care much for lines, I say that much

Quinn anickers, his eyes lighting as he steps toward me, "Come on. Let's leave Timmons in here to brood. Let me show you my room.

Your ? Lack conspicuously. Come on Delilah, you know you did pick these jeans just for him to dump you in some motel. It's okay to be a that every ate and a while. You already know he's a sure thing

"That way," Quinn says, placing a hand on my lower back over the sweater and setting off an explosion of unholy thoughts. He urges me

think about is how his fingers feel warming the top of my plum and how his hand barks toward the ball I just came from and all it seems to be modding itself onto the back of my ass.

Glancing up at him, I catch him watching from again, and the look in his eyes can only be described as predatory. I bite my lip, turning away as he guides me down the stairs and through the open doorway.

Well, I went right. This is dus hose. The far wall is all glass, with a set of double doors that open onto another patio deck. The stairs from the patio on the top floor apparently wind down to this house and then down to the rocky shore below. There's a huge king sized bed to my left, a large swinging chair in the corner, a seventy five inch flat screen mounted on the wall to my right, another bathroom beyond

looks up the back wall that's built against the hill.

Fight here please like this one day soon, come on that lower to help me with the trust.

"What do you think?" Quinn asks, his voice so soft I'm forced to look out him.

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Sorty-Eight

admit. It's a little hard to have a sila

come unsundered as it's resting in

my shoulders again and

Spend the day

has from crying Ape you string, podden?

feel what? Please don't use a cherry line on

and traces his finger over bare skin of my shoulder Sparks with his touch, forming me to gasp and

Chapter Comments

WWN

got me giggling like a fool

[VIEW ALL 2 COMMENTS](#)

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,656 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Nine

QUINN

Stars felt it. She had to. The look in her eyes says she did, but she shakes her head no.

What? Could I be wrong about this? All the signs my father over told about are there. At least on my end. Her irresistible scent is so strong it Ulstratens my control even now. Just looking at her exposed shoulders is making me want to sink my teeth in. In fact my fangs have been tingling since I elled her arousal in the Jeep. Her pussy w practically weeping for me and the scent of it was so strong nearly tumbled us by almost steering off the road.

"No? I ask in disbelief. "You're telling me you felt nothing?"

"I felt your uninvited finger dragging across my shoulder, yes." She sighs, looking away, "But that's all." She crosses her arms over her stomach, drawing my eyes down to her hips once again.

God her hips are incredible. They punch out on each side in a perfect curve from her tiny waist and my hands are aching to grab onto

"So, nothing else then? No... tingles, or heat, just... past a finger drawing over your flesh and creeping you out? is that what you're saying?"

She hesitates for a moment, then nods, but the dilating of her pupils when she answers tells me she're remembering what it felt like and that she is a dar. But why lie to me about something like that? What's the deal? She can t think I'm ugly, can she? Because, I'm not. Thet

Then it occurs to me. She was staying wo I two guys in Dobson's cabin. Two! Fuck. She might just be pretending she doesn't feel anything so she can lie faithful to her kart.

But she's my mate! She has to be. I sigh heavily, disappearing into my doset to change, but leaving the door open so that I can watch her

Shit? Lyor since Domonic met Draven, I've been hoping to find mine. When we decided on our rules five years ago, I was the only one who wasn't fully on bound with the No Mates rule. Yes, I missed my mother Eike everyone else did, and yes, it was a tragic

loss, Our fathers were unprepared for such an attack, but we weren't. Back then, the only thing I imagined might heal me from the pain of losing my mother was finding my mate.

Maybe I am wrong about her. I've been wrong before. When I first saw Emily, I thought maybe she was mine. She's beautiful and the desire for her struck me right away, but there was no delicious scent, there were no sparks. I even tried to kiss her when we were cooking together in the packhouse, Nothing, no electricity whatsoever. Then the next morning, Koda attacked me in the living room and it became clear to me whom Emily belonged to.

I was insanely jealous of the two of them, Domonic and Koda. Not because of the women, but because I wanted my mate.

Before we shifted last night, Rainier confessed he found his mate too and even marked her already. So something was happening around here. Something powerful had to be drawing our mates forward, for real.

As I finish getting dressed, I gaze at Delilah. Her back is to me as she steps out onto the patio to stare out at the sea. Her fiery hair billows around her like flames in the breeze, the soft golden touches of it giving life to the illusion

Could it be that I'm just insanely attracted to her? Could this just be wishful thinking?

No. It can't be. My reaction to her was too different. Too... singular,

Fuck: Her scarf. I dropped it in the creek when I went to rescue her. The knowledge saddens me a bit and I can't rightly explain why.

As I step out of my closet, dressed in jeans and a muscle shirt, I hear her phone ring and hang back as she answers it. Quieting my

1/4

Chapter One Hundred Sixty Nine

breathing, I listen in

Cane! I'm going to kill you for leaving me out here Why the fuck are you here

The man's voice is barely audible, but I can hear it. Sery, D. Indyk gee trying to get her bare a few minutes ago."

Delilah jerks and her voice comes out sullen. "They let me in the both of

years

"Of course they did, 1). I already told you they would. Listen, Lonely called to let your hom we were okay I'm treat brow way waged to k

Ohhhh! You're okay! That's great! Meanwhile, I'm starving, benke, and lyg changed on by lion in the eye oys and have to laugh.

"His

"Not the point, Cane

Charlie and I will be back tomorrow night. They want us to stay here and wait for Elder Promon he's the expfit on what we saw that linn do. I told you I wasn't imagining things! I saw hat thats by coming to them. He and Elder Roman are probably going to head back with us?

Delilah's voice suddenly became frantic, "Toman? Not Not Canet Drait jou remember what be

"Well, dad's gone D. I've got to go. Charlie wants to say something, here you go

""No! Wait a minute-

"Hey, Dr

"Charlie, what the fuck? Put my brother back on."

"He's busy, they just took him inside. I just wanted to tell you how much I miss that ass of yours and how I cant wa

"Fuck off Charlie! Delilah snaps, before hanging up the phone and dropping her face into her hands.

Headquarters?

Elder Roman?

What I'm feeling right now is a mix between disappointment and trepidation, Everything I just heard, I absolutely tune to report i brother and this Charle are probably the ones who shot Gayle. And from the sound of things, they watched her drafter Then of course, there is the name Roman that for some reason rings a tiny little bell in my head, but I figure why.

I wonder if Charlie's her boyfriend. The thought saddens me

shot

toy say

Staring at her back as I approach, I decide I have to know if she's any mate before I make any decisions on what to do fuck it, I'm just going to go for it, and when I reach her leaning against the railing I reach out and take her hips in my hands just the way I've been dying

to.

A low growl forms in my throat when she gasps, but she doesn't shove my hands away. She straightens her back and I curve my hands upward, closing them around her waist as I pull her back against me. I instantly hard, but I don't want to scare her, so I refrain from grinding myself into her ass the way I want to. It's difficult. She's breathing heavily as I dip my face into her hair and trace the shell of her ear with my nose. I can feel her trembling and smell her arousal as it pools between her legs. I slide my hands back down over the perfect sphere of her hips and dip my mouth toward her shoulder carefully. The moment my mouth crests her skin she pushes back into me and

2/4

Chapter One Hundred-Sixty-Nine

fire sparks across my lips.

"Oh," I moan softly, lashing at her flesh with my tongue.

"Maximus," she breathes, leaning her head back against my chest. She's fucking tiny, I'm dying to have her under me.

I chuckle, wondering why she decided on that name for me. "Lilac," I say tauntingly, nipping at her shoulder with my teeth. "Do you have a

boyfriend?

As my hands slide slowly around the front of her to stroke up and down her rib cage, she shivers. "W-what?"

I grin, placing an open mouthed kiss against the side of her neck and groaning with pleasure as a bolt of electric charge rides over me and I nearly cum in my pants. She is it. She is be

"Are you going to tell me you didn't feel that either? I whisper, pulling her in tighter as my body goes insanely hot.

1... she trails off on a whimper as I suck gently on her skin.

I can smell her juices and I know she's probably soaked, but I also know I have somewhere to be and as much as I want to stay right here, I can't. It takes every little drop of my willpower to stop what I'm doing and release her. My chest is heaving as I step away and she is panting, her shoulders rising and falling erratically.

She still hasn't turned around and I have to wonder what her eyes look like right now. What is she thinking about? Me, or Charlie?

I have to go, I begin. "But I won't be long,

so if

you to a hotel, like you wanted."

If you want to, you can wait for me here and enjoy the beach-she stiffens or I can take

"And then what?" she whispers,

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Never mind," she says, finally turning around to study me. "I don't live out here. I live in Oregon. I'm heading home tomorrow.

I tense as a sharp pain burns through my chest. "I thought you said you were going to be here for a couple days."

"Things have changed," she says darkly, looking away for a moment. When she turns back to me, there's a definite sadness in her eyes. "But I wouldn't mind spending a night with you." "One night?" I hiss, my

my gaze

narrowing. Fuck that. "Are you so sure that's all you're going to want?"

My question surprises her and she nibbles on her lip causing me to swallow a groan and my eyes to focus there.

"Don't act like you don't do this all the

time," she says with a smirk. "You probably change women. you change underwear."

Okay. So what? None of them were my mate. I don't have time right now to convince her of anything different, so I nod. Fine," I say. "One night. Then, if you still want to leave, I'll take you home myself" Her eyebrow quirks up. "Oh, I'm going to leave."

I grin, throwing her a wink just see about that.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,337 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy DOMONIC

I was dumbfounded. In utter shock.

After watching the video of Gio talking to Draven for the fourth time around, it finally began to sink in. My gorgeous little mate's father was a wolf. Even though Draven insisted that he might be lying, I knew he spoke the truth. Because I could scent the wolves in the yard and I knew there was something different about them, but I couldn't figure out what

Now, I know,

Still, she had a point. I would like to see him change first before I throw my chips in with his story about The Great Migration. However, my dad used to tell me stories that his grandfather once told him. About our ancestors coming from a place that favored darkness and how back then they spent most of their time in their wolf forms. It got me thinking.. maybe there was a way to do away with the forced shift completely. Maybe, we could find balance another way and alter our reaction to the full moon's power.

As an idea begins to blossom in my head, Draven comes sauntering into the dining room waving her hand in my face, again.

Really?

I snatch her wrist and pull her down on my lap. "He didn't say when he'd be coming back?"

She gives me an odd look. "Who? Glo?"

I nod, stroking the front of her flat stomach and thinking of my pup.

"He did not," Draven says. But got the feeling it would be soon. So I imagine tonight."

"My dad will be back tonight, to

"How's Goffin doing?" Draven aski, a little too concerned for the king of the lion den

"Who cares? You shouldn't, I snap playfully

Seriously, Domonic. Any news?"

I shake my head, no. According to my father, Gryffin still hadn't shifted and he was looking worse everyday. "It's time to get to the meeting, I say, my eyes focusing on her delicious throat.

I can't help myself, I pull her in closer and begin to suck on her neck. I can never get enough of this woman, and even though we just finished having sex in the shower, I want bet again. My cock is rock hard against the bottom of her ass and when she moans that's all it takes for me to pick her up and set her on the table in front of me. I opro her legs swiftly, and cup her ass to pull her forward into my

hips.

"I want you again," I say, unripping my jeans and biting on her shoulder

"Domonic," she laughs, throuitly. "It's already twelve. Were going to be late as it is."

"Exactly, I hiss, taking her mouth in mine and kissing her so roughly that she has no choice but to give in."What's a few more minutes? I going to cum quick."

"Fuck," she murmurs, falling back across the table as I rip her short and panties off her legs in one motion.

Lowering my jeans, I position myself at her entrance, watching her face as I glide my shaft up and down her folds. Her pussy is wet with

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Seventy

her juices and I lew the way if feefs to fether wont in the world my gym

If most

She smiles at me before biting her lip and speezing her bosate though her. a fun !

I growl, grasping her hips and stroking inte har storty, fortumenty Parking pertaris i gio, je ne more in TAMASHA myself disappear into her, over and

agai

She's bucking upward and whining because I making it on them out I go the way the tours Mon you to elench, begging for mens friction and each time I price the whinges as these prote

I shake my head, and even through my rock twitter as if it agrams worn far, i martua in the Bay

hips and enjoying the frantic pants coming from her lips. Fran that her Anetas (Tinging MANA my ada kes trap. Her walls are prifting and her eyes are closed. She's close and do

Then, she reaches down with her left hand the massage ber elit Fucking Angle. She met ber of the har best night. She must have had, pl

Then I realia, I told Draven to put it on only if she agreed to marry maja

come all over my die

I finally give in, trusting into her greedily as my orgasm takes cover and open in pleasure as I reach up to grip her shredders and I Reich inside of have

Lay there over the top of her for the next couple of minutes, holding whispers. You are so damn blind sometimes.

I grin, propping myself up on my elbows to gaze drony at her. Should I pretend

cleaned up and head to the bar. People are waiting on un

I laugh to myself as she rolls her eyes and yanks on her hair in frustration. This is going to be as much for

QUINN

We've four are We ve just started watching the tape of what happened in the parking er last night, and all of us to our big sm the lounge. When I got here I learned that sometne benker in agric, trating next the front window glass has already been replaced, tear the interior is still a mess and won't be opening tonight

hally

My eyes fall on Rainier and his mate who are sitting together in the other booth. The is on the

radiant. Gorgeous for sure she actually reminds me of a Playboy Bunny, but I wont tell Rainier that. Father way, watching the way things to his among through my heart.

My mate intends to go home towwwwrrow. So that gives me only one night to make

know she's going to be trouble, and our pairing is not ideal, I want her. 1 want to have her clinging to me in to clinging to him.

list will she accept me in the end? She's on intimate Terms with pouchers for God's sake. What if 11

I shake those thoughts off, my eyes falling on Brant, who is suddenly staring at me with the integration of a can read us. All of us. Demonic's mother used to be like that. She was knew when new of us was port, or wi something. Now, Draven's gazing at me as if she can sense the sadness in my heart.

I toss her a wan smile and turn my attention back to the screen just as Rainier's claws shift out angrily the television, his girl is being dragged to a Cadillac by some big human idiot where he pulls a gun on barely hear the audio, because the cameras are too high in the trees to pick up much of it. But when prowl seems to reverberate through the speakers.

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy

The entire room, with the exception of Rainier lady, is suddenly tic what were like during the forced shift. When Rainier suddenly charge-jje times, I hear his girl whimper. Were all in a state of slauch wie

Ffor him to come to her rescue during a forced shift, they must hun

"Holy shit," Ryder says in awe and Emily taps him lightly on the back of the heat in warning

Suddenly Domonics wolf slips onto the screen, then Bodes, followed by the test

man never has time to pop off another shot before were on him. Douding him backarand

But what does it for me, is when Rainier gets up, seemingly healed, andur muscles is no gusto poong T TIMES THE LAST THE

nuodas bar as if telling her to go inside. She's totally unafraid of um, despite the fur our waives you must Spor Tesis

feet

1. be. And yes, when I say normal, I mean the ones who don't shift.

myself to step out back for a momen

Suddenly I am in desperate need of air and I excuse. muscles. My mind on Delilah and how much I already want to get back to the bosor. "Tuck," I curse, as the back door opens and Draven stage out behind top

"What's wrong?" she asks. "And don't lie to me. Where my

I grin, despite that I dont feel like smiling. In such a i

eyes and say, 'I think I met my mate last right. And she's one of the parchers

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[1,766 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy-One DELILAH

Wandering through Quinn's room should feel bizarre. After all, I only met him today. Shouldn't a big red flag have gone up the moment he told me to wait for him here? Probably. But for whatever reason, it don't. The scent of him is everywhere in this place and honestly, it's

somewhat soothing.

I think of the way he crept up behind me on the patio and I shiver. The strength in his hands as they closed over my hips had me breathless and needy. I kept hoping that he would strip my pants down to bend me over the railing. My body is heating even now at just the thought of it. The memory of his lips on my neck as he groaned has me wanting to crawl onto his bed and touch myself as I imagine what could have been

Oh yeah. I desperately need to get laid

The fact that he basically promised to do me tonight has not escaped me. I saw what he's working with and I have a hunch he may climb into uncharted territory with that thing between his legs. God! Imagine the G-spots that might be found! As big as he is, every part of me is bound to get touched! Sweet baby Jesus! Amen!

rable

But then at the same time... I wonder if it might be a mistake to give in to someone like him. A man whose touch alone is so m that I might never be the same. What if he ruins me for anyone else in the future? Strike that what if-Im pretty sure he already has. It was like he was focused from the moment I met him in the creek. Like he decided to have me and was going to. Never a doubt in his mind. He knew I would melt like butter

in his hands and would be helpless to stop it. He's probably played the game a thousand times. He knows what works and what doesn't. I'm nobody special to him and if I stay here like he wants me to, waiting for him to come back so that he can rock my world, then I'll be no different than any other girl he's been with.

ing out that he doesn't want me any more than the next chick... I think I'll pass.

Damn it! I really wanted to get laid, but at the risk of finding

Pulling out my phone, I search up the price of a train ticket home and am pleasantly surprised that it's only forty bucks. Before I can change my mind, I hit purchase, and just like that I'm in. My train leaves at three p.m. and judging by the distance I'm going to have to walk to get to the train station, I had better leave now. At least this way I arrive home tonight and be able to get Cane away from those loons, The Elder Few, before they send him back out here with Elder Roman,

With

one last

glance around, I sigh. A shocking amount of sadness washes over me as I head for the front door. An ache thrums inside of my chest and the voice of the devil whispers in my ears saying, "What four are totally wrong about him? What if you are special? What if you never get this chance again? But of course, my mother's voice follows close behind it with, "You could never be special, hest look at you,

You're all wrongs and no rights."

So, yeah... I keep walking.

QUINN

After I share my little secret with Draven, I don't expect the calm acceptance that she gives me. Nor her wide smile of excitement when she says she can't wait to meet her.

"She's leaving tomorrow," I say, "Back to Oregon."

"Uh-huh," Draven murmurs. "That's what they all say," she chuckles. "We'll see. Have a little more faith in yourself, Quinn. Your days as a gigolo are over."

I wish. "I told her I would drive her. That way I at least know where to find her once I come up with a plan of attack."

Draven laughs. "You don't need a plan of attack. One thing I'm learning you can't stop what's meant to be. And no matter how much you want to forget that someone that

holds your heart in their hands, you won't. Whether it be your mate... or somebody else you once loved." She sighs, "If she's your mate, she won't forget you."

1/3

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy-One

"What about the whole poacher thing?" I ask. "Domande isn't going to that go on if he were to could use her to get the others."

"Well," Draven says softly. "Then Domanic don't need to know until you're ready for him"

I grin, opening the back door for her so we can rejoin the other. "So it's that, is a r

She walks past me waving her ring finger in the air so I can see her engagement and sparkling in now. "It's casualy

Walking back to my spot, I notice that every pair of eyes is riveted to what is playing on the

back booth, I tip my head up to see what has everyone so mesmerized. The clip playing now

climbed into that hideous orange Cadillac and driven off and as she sheds, shadow is steadily climbing

every one of us leans closer in anticipation.

It's a man all dressed in black, wearing a ski mask and a hood. "There's something on his jacket mere watching jantly as the man takes something out of his pocket and picks the lock quicker than anyone I ever seen. "St

Rain, when we're done here you need to get someone who can pull up clean image of that parket, as far as th

ja

can't place it."

The footage splits in half on the screen, showing both the parking lot and the inside of

Interior cameras are triggered. We watch as this bastard goes straight for the office and then disappears behind the wall. He traces his place and then races upstairs. Bartlett growls as he realizes the man most likely just slipped comes back down he's holding something in his hand....

"What the fuck did he take?" Rainier snaps, "What is that?"

Domonic hits the pause button just as the guy's front turns toward the camera and although the quality of the video on the pocket of his black jacket is too wrinkled to make out. But now, it's easy to see what it is he is holding- apartment upstairs. My entire body goes cold as I realize what it is and my eyes go straight for Rainier's

"Is that what I think it is? Rainier growls, his claws shifting out again, this time gouging into the tat

"Yes," his girl says next to him. "Those are mine." All eyes shoot toward her with the same question in my mind. She frowns. They're

dirty."

This fucker just stole a dirty pair of her panties Jesus Christ. What the fuck for?

"Who the fuck is this guy? Why can't we scent him?" Domonic hisses.

"Play the rest of the tape," I suggest, eager to see what happens next.

But when Domonic hits play the dude simply disappears, then a moment later, a crash is heard and glass is seen flying in from

the outside.

"Are you sure you didn't scent anything strange when you got here this morning?" Domonic asks Bartlett

He shakes his head. "Nothing. Unless you count the heavy scent of pine needles and wood smoke. Whoever the guy is, he obviously knows how to disguise his scent."

Draven's head jerks up. "Thomas," she says, "Thomas smelled like smoke and sandalwood."

Rainier flinches, and he and Domonic exchange looks. My mind is too busy to focus on this crap, so I turn my attention outside the moment I do, I tense

A very familiar head of fiery red hair and a perfectly rounded ass is flouncing past the bar and heading south. Where the fuck is she going!

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy-One

A sudden sense of urgency hits me and I just know I have to leave. After a quick glance around, I see everyone is busy, so I slip out the back door and jump in my Escalade.

She hasn't gotten far by the time I catch up to her, but it's clear by the look on her face she's heading somewhere in a hurry. She doesn't even notice my car hovering slowly behind her. I cut her off when she attempts to cross the street, pulling left in front of her and riding up on the sidewalk to make sure she stops.

I jump out of the car and her face flushes in relief "Oh!" she says. "Hi

"Hi," I say. "Where the fuck are y

you going? I thought you wer

were gonna wait for me,"

She sighs, nibbling her lip nervously.

A bolt of pain strikes me straight through the chest as I realize she never intended to stay. She only pretended to agree to get me to leave.

"You could have just said no," I say quietly, hoping I look nothing like I feel. "You didn't have to pretend you were interested."

I chastise myself as I begin to realize, everybody's story is not the same and Draven may be dead wrong about this one. I turn away from her beautiful hazel blue eyes and climb back into my car.

"I wasn't pretending!" she says and I feel her hand close around the bare skin of my forearm.

The heat from where she touches me causes my muscles to flex and I draw in a sharp breath wondering why I can't just shake her off and drive away. I want to. But I can't.

"Then why did you leave?" I ask, my eyes on her hand. She begins to pull away, but I reach out and catch her hand, feeling her tremble at my touch.

"I have to get home," she says, exasperated, "I have to get to my brother and stop him before he does something incredibly stupid."

Her brother...

"Get in the car," I say calmly, knowing what I'm about to do is probably both dangerous and reckless,

"My train leaves at three."

"Get in the car," I say again, yanking her toward me so that I can take her backpack off and throw it in my backseat.

"What the hell are you doing? I just told you! I have to-"

"Get in the car, Lilac, I'll reimburse you for your ticket, because I'm taking you to your brother and then I'm bringing you back with me. You promised me a date and I want it. Now get in the car"

I can smell her sudden arousal and I think I hear my zipper groan as my dick engorges with enough force to rock me backward in my seat, Fuck.

Delilah bites her lip and I watch her eyes go nearly black as a blush washes over her features. "Okay,"

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[1,598 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy-Two DOMONIC

"So," Paul begins, "You're thinking that if we spend more time in our well forms that maybe we can alter the effects of the forced shift?"

I nod. "Yes, exactly. But it has to be at night. When the nannn is in its wading phases."

"When its giving power," Rainier comments. "That makes a weird amouch of sense."

"It does, doesn't it," I say with a grin, watching the girls and Bartlett talk to Goal behind the counter. "We hardly ever run as a pack anymore. And even when we did, we did it because we were forced to by our fathers," "Even then, it was before sun down," Paul adds, his blue eyes twinkling with amusement. As if he's lost in an old memory. "Those were the days, man. Remember?"

"Haha!" Lief says. "Yess! They were!"

Grant guffaws, sitting back to take a deep drink of the beer in his hand You mean, when we used to break off from our training route and scare all the human campers?"

"Yup, Paul chuckles. "What the hell did you think I was talking about? Surely not the few times we followed the rules and stuck to the

woods."

I turn back to Rainier. "I don't think Felix should stay here above the bar anymore."

"I agree," Rainier states. That's why I just booked one of Old Bob's beach houses just down the street from Quinn's place. She and I will stay there until I find a place."

"Where the fuck is Quinn, anyway?" I ask, glancing around in confusion "He was here just a few minutes ago. He needs to hear this! We all need to be up to date." I glare at Timmons. "Where the fuck is he?"

Timmons shakes his head, a sneer on his lips. "You know how he gets. He found a new piece of pussy and left it back at our place. He probably went home to hang her a few times before tossing her out. He knows I won't let her stay more than one night." "You won't let her?" P

Paul snorts. "It's his house. How would you stop her?"

"He picked her up in Blackjack, Timmons says with a snarl. "She was with the poachers."

My entire body goes rigid with anger. "What?" I meet Timmons' eyes as the entire table goes silent. Even Goose is listening now as he approaches our table. "He brought a poacher back to his house and fucking left her there? To come here?" Timmons nods. "Yup. Why do you think I was so pissed at him this morning when we both came in? Why do you think we came in separate cars?"

"I don't know, fucker. Lover's spat, maybe? Or some other ride me I'm your roommate, ridiculous shit!" I growl. "I didn't think, asshole. I didn't care! But now I do! Call him! I want him back here now!"

"The girl," Goose says suddenly, looking at Timmons. "You're talking about the redhead that Gayle attacked this morning? The one you came and told me about?"

"Yes," Timmons hisses, glaring at the table. "I mean, I knew she was hot but I took a pass on that one because well - she was with a hunting party! I figured Quinn would pass on her too! When he insisted on stepping between her and Gayle, I thought he was only trying to keep the rest of us safe by keeping the body count down. On account of what happened last night, to homeboy in the parking lot and what Old Bob saw. But he brought her back to the house instead and when I hit him up about it, he said that he just wanted to fuck a

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Seventy Two

(Arronding to Gayle, Cerite says. "The girl want peretuity a threat,

zel walet dressed to bunt, nor was the with the men when

If the girl in a threat," Pand seps eftly. Then why dat Gayle attack berse of who they do or do not associate with:

Innocent humans are meant to be protected, not executed

a grim smile spreading across his lips. Because when Gayle went looking for some payback, the girl was the only one of the left. The men www gee. And you knew her Gayle and Griffin are about catching all prachers. They want to end them on this Barth just as badly at gras prys want to find the arsonist from five years ago." He sighs. In Gayler's eyes, the girl is just as guilty as the meni are Simply on the strength of her turning a blind eye. I know it's not right, and so does the which is why I stepped in after Timmons showed up at the den to tell me about it."

"Regardless of whether the girl is dangerous, or not, Rainier says plainly "She's committed a crime just by not reporting her companions. You call it turning a blind eye - I call it negligence."

"So what? What are you gonna do about it, Riotte? Draven snaps at Rainier with more animosity than anyone seemed to expect coming from her sweet lips. "Arrest her? Are you fucking kidding me?"

"Baby," I say in defense of my brother, reaching for her hand as she angrily snatches it away from me. "You don't understand-

"Oh no!" she chuckles, and the chilling glare she gives me has me snapping my lips shut so quickly that I'm actually a little embarrassed. "I don't understand? Is that what you were about to say? That / don't understand what it feels like to be hunted? Or chased? Or rejected when I finally find the someone who's supposed to accept me?"

"Rejected?! Baby, what are you talking about, now? You're my mate, and yes, the way I handled finding you was wrong," I admit, trying to catch her eye, but failing. "But this girl isn't anybody's mate. She's not one of us! She's one of them. Other than that, she's just a bitch on a list of different bitches that Quinn has devoted himself to nailing at least once in his life."

Draven's green eyes sparkle with angry fire as she gazes around at all of us and one by one my brothers' heads dip a little in shame. Even Goose looks a bit sheepish. Right then I finally see it - the Alpha Wolf in her that I never knew was there. Or rather that I didn't recognize until after hearing all that Gio said to her the last night.

The girl isn't anybody's mate," Draven repeats, with a shake of her head. Her eyes float back and forth between me, Rainier, and Koda. "You're so sure about that, are you? Really? Because obviously Quinn must bring bitches as you called them back to his house all the time." Her eyes land on Timmons. "Right?"

1. me. "He act

gaze narrows as he clears his throat, "Uh... no.

1. o. He actually doesn't." He looks at me. actually never does."

Timmons gaze

"Hmm," Draven hums, placing a curious finger under her chin in a picture of mock innocence. "How strange then, that he would choose a poacher female as the first. I wonder what possessed him to do such a thing?"

Were all staring at her in shock. Her implication riding each of us differently as we slowly try to accept what she has just made painfully obvious.

"Bart, help me out here," she yells back.

Bartlett grims. "You're on your own kiddo. If I spoke to the Alpha like that, I'd be picking my teeth up off the floor, right now. You're doing great, Best man for the job."

"What are you thinking? Paul asks, when Draven Einally turns around and walks halk to the counter.

Im thinking." I say with a grin, my eyes on Draven's back. "That I fucking we love my lady."

QUINN 2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy-Two

We've already been on the road for an hour now and try as I might, I cit seem to get Delilah talking. When I spy a sign that says there's a diner off the next exit, I quickly steer toward it, hopping off the freehy and pissing my Lilac off. Her head jerks in my direction. "What the hell are you doing? Where are we going?"

I smile, glad I finally have her attention. "Ah. So you're not muite after all

"This isn't funny," she gripes, unbuckling her seatbelt to lean over and gut her hands on my steering wheel. "I need to get to my brother!"

Despite that I could easily overpower her, I let her force me back onto the freeway, but I'm hardly prepared for how her hands accidentally brush across the front of my jeans when she turns the wheel.

"Fuck," I hiss, pressing my back into my seat and gritting my teeth. I don't need to look down to know how painfully hard I am right now. I can feel it. In fact, my dick is pulsing so wildly against the confines of my jeans that I may end up needing to unzip my pants just to drive.

"Oh my God!" Delilah whispers. "I-I'm sorry! I didn't mean to do that!"

"Don't be sorry," I reply, my eyes heavy as I gaze at her. "But if you touch my steering wheel again there will be consequences. Despite that she looks horrified, the sweet scent of her arousal floats my way and I growl, looking over at her hungrily. She's panting with her eyes glued to my zipper. I'm done. That's it. "Fuck!" I snap, pulling off the shoulder and behind a copse of trees. I don't even look at her. I can't. I just say, "Either you are going to take care of this for me right now. Or I am going to and you are going to watch me."

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,495 words]

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy-Four QUINN

"So tell me," I say when we've both calmed down a little. I'm finally in control again, the raging desire for Delilah's smouthi on me only hanked by having her tiny hand in mine. "Why are you afraid for him? your heather?"

I chance a look at her, keeping my eyes on hers, careful not to allow my gaze to wander toward her lips. Should I look at her mouth again so soon after having the pleasure of it on my shaft, I'll be in danger of pulling over again and something tells me she might not be so into me if I do. There's so much worry in her eyes. So much fear.... I just want to take it all away. I'm dying for her to know how much she means to me and how I won't let anything but her ever again. But it's too soon for that. I don't want to scare her away.. "He's an idiot," she says so suddenly that I have to laugh. "But he's my brother and I love him. Ever since my dad died, we've only had each

LINE ID other to lean on."

"Your dad died? I'm sorry to hear that, Lilac," I say with genuine concern. "You must have loved him very much."

She snickers, "Yeah. I did. We both did."

I arch an eyebrow. "Why is that funny?" I can't help but ask.

She chuckles, "Because my dad's the entire reason my brother is the way he is." She sighs heavily. "He brought him up around people who disgust me. Their very way of life... disgusts me."

"What way is that?" I ask, slightly wary of what I'm about to hear. I already know she's involved with poachers. Her brother... Charlie.... whoever that fucker might be.

She stiffens, her hand going tense in my grip. She ignores my question asking one of her own instead, "Why do you call me Lilac? told you my name. But still you call me Lilac. Who was she? A girlfriend?"

I've

I shake my head and she rips her hand from mine. A disappointed growl erupts from my chest before I reach over and unclip her seatbelt, tugging her into the middle and reclipping her next to me with the hidden buckle she had no idea was there. I nearly purr in satisfaction as her face lights with a giddy sort of shock.

"I like you close to me," I say quietly. As close as I can get you."

see, she br

breathes, biting her lip and I suppress a groan at the sight.

"You are the only Lilac," I say flatly. "And I call you that, because that's what you smell like to me. Like... lillacs,"

"Really?" she asks, licking her lips. "Lilacs?" She sniffs herself. "I don't smell lilacs."

I laugh, I can't help it. "Of c

course, you don't. But trust me, it's all over you. And... it drives me crazy."

My eyes are on the road now, but I can feel her staring at me when she says, "Maximus."

grin, liking her nickname for me although I have no idea why. "Care to explain that one? So long as you're not going to tell me I smell like a guy you once knew."

She laughs and the sound sparkles across me, making

slide my hand over the top of her thigh, possessively.

"Maximus as in gluteus maximus," she says. "It was the first of your she cuts off, coughing. "The first of your really deliciously sculpted muscles that I saw when you saved me. Your gluteus maximus muscles are probably the best I've ever seen," "My

ass?" I chortle, loving the name even more now than I already did. And what do you mean, probably?" I snap.

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Four

I feel her hand stroke over my mind in her lap. "Okay... not probably. More he definitely. In fact... she whispers, her mouth coming close to my ear in what seems like a surge of confidence. All your muscles are the best I've ever seen.

I shiver, my dick going from half to whole that quickly, I groan deep into my throat, squeezing her thigh tightly in my hand. "I can't wait to get you back to my place where I can worship you."

She stills again and I notice right away that she has lost her smile. I don't know if

she'll be going back there. I have my brother to take care of and he..." she shakes her head, seeming to lose her words.

I want to tell her right then that I will do whatever it takes to protect him too. Even though I know how hard it will be. Even if I can't exactly see how I will do it. Not just yet. But there must be a way and I will find it

"We don't even have a place to stay right now," she admits tearfully. And even though I don't agree with what he's been doing - I know he thinks he's doing it for us. To take care of us. It's all he knows. It's all my dad ever taught him to do. And now..."

"You're talking about poaching, aren't you?" It's not really a question, but she nods just the same. I push back all my initial anger at the prospect - reminding myself that she is human and so is her brother. I brace myself for whatever truth I might hear next. "And how do you feel about poaching, Delilah? Have you ever-

"No!" she snaps. "Never! I would never hurt an animal! Not ever! In fact, just last night I freed a wolf from one of my brother's traps!" she shouts defensively. And I was scared to death when I did it! But I just couldn't bear the thought of my brother coming back to kill the beautiful animal. My wolf. I thought the damn thing was going to kill me at first," she admits. "But..."

I can't get the stupid grin off my face when I hear her call me wolfie. I was the one with blood on my paw last night I was the one she freed. I know it. "But?" I prompt her, suddenly aware of exactly why I came back from the full moon shift feeling so empty. I met my mate last night in my full wolf form and had to leave her. How fucking weird is that? How sad!

"But," she says, throwing me an odd look. "He didn't."

"He?" I ask

She laughs, "It was definitely a he. We got up close and personal. I know It was a male. Like I said, I thought he was going to kill me, but at the very last second, he licked me instead. It was all kinds of weird.

Don't laugh at her, don't do it Up close and personal, huh? She has no idea she had that very same wolf down her throat a few moments

"So your brother," I say, changing the subject, "does he actually like killing animals? I mean, how many have he caught?"

She shakes her head, then shrugs. "None by himself. My dad's only been gone two years. He only decided to start poaching about six months ago when he lost his job as a mechanic. Who knows how he really feels about it. But my dad, you see... he was way into it. He was part of a secret society of poachers and everything. A group of disgusting men that make their entire living off of the capture and murder of endangered animals. He got rich doing it. I hated that part about my life. Hated that all our money came from his ties to that place, Hut when he died everything changed for the worse. My mother took off with half of what he left. The other half is in a trust for me and my brother that we can't even touch for the next two years. And my mother is even trying to get her hands on that'

"Your mother sounds like a complete bitch," I hiss, thinking of how I can't wait until I can share all that I have with this woman. She'll never have to struggle again. Fuck her mother and that dirty money

"She definitely is one," Delilah confesses somewhat sadly and I stroke a soothing hand over her leg.

I'm breathing carefully now. Trying to digest all that she's just said and at the same time realizing... I might need my brothers' help for this. A secret society of ponchers? Fucking hell

I ask in as careless a voice as I can manage, "Endangered species. Is that all that they're after?"

"Isn't that enough?" she spits.

mean... supposedly they go after... other game too. But it's ridiculous what they hunt and I'd feel stupid

2/3

Chapter One Hundred-Seventy-Four

even mentioning it."

I swallow the lump in my throat and say, "What other game, Delilah?"

"I don't want to say. I'll feel like an idiot."

"Just try me," I coax her. "I swear, I won't think any less of you. Just to

She groans, covering her face in her hands. They're crazy! Insane, rom members, and their sons." She adds softly, Shifters. These men... they

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,702 words]

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Five QUINN

As we approached the Lewis and Clark Bridge in Longview, just outside of the Oregon/Washington border, I pulled off the highway. There was a burger joint with an amazing view of the Columbia River just to the left of the off-ramp. I had eaten all day (unless you count the bite or two my brothers and I took out of the human last night LOL) and I was usually caught stuffing my face. Mainly with proteins.

I mean sure, as Wolf Shifters, we require an abundant amount, and we naturally tend toward meat, but there are all kinds of foods we can gain sustenance from. However, as wolves, we do gravitate toward animal matter. Each and every one of my brothers loves nothing more than a good steak and lobster dish, but ever since opening up my gym in Port Orchard, I have taken to ingesting large quantities of both plant and animal based foods. Why? Because I have a lot of gym members that are older human women. When The Pack House 24 first opened, they were constantly coming to me for dietary advice. At first, couldn't really help them because I'm a wolf, and the only alternative to meat that I was ever taught to consume was nuts. But after a month of diving into the world of human nutrition, endeavoring to upgrade my portfolio, so to speak, Hell as much in love with soy as I did with cows,

Today, my gym not only provides the Energy Bar - a before and after cafe for protein shakes and all-natural smoothies, but I've added the Fuel Up Counter- a tiny cafeteria style restaurant devoted to serving a variety of plant-based meals. It's somewhere the older folks can sit and eat before a workout, or grab some takeout for the week ahead. I have my very own little group of Steel Magnolias that absolutely love me and are meet at the Fuel Up for lunch every Sunday,

Luna Lilly used to tell me that I was going to grow up to be the largest in the pack and for a while, I actually thought that meant I was going to be Alpha. So when we all turned ten years old and Domonic and I got into a boxing match over who was going to take the lead, Luna Lilly pulled me aside to have a heart-to-heart.

MINT-FLASHBACK

**Quinn baby, what's going on?" Luna asked.

I gazed up at her with angry eyes, thinking that she lied to me about who I was going to be. "You said that I was going to be the biggest! That means that I'm going to be Alpha! Why would Domonic be Alpha, if I'm going to be the bigger wolf?"

She grinned at me, ruffling my hair and taking a seat next to me on the bricks. "Becoming the biggest doesn't necessarily mean you are going to be Alpha, sweetheart. An Alpha isn't built just from muscles and strength. He is chosen by the pack as a leader because of his dominant nature and the strength of his Alpha Energy

I crossed my arms over my chest, gazing up at her with a half smile. "Is that why Domonic never lets the rest of us play football without him? Or basketball either? Whenever it's just me and Tim or me and Rain playing, he runs out and stops us unless he wants to play too. He is always so bossy!"

She laughed, nodding her head. "Yeah. Probably." Then she wrapped me up in a hug, kissing my forehead and making me squirm. "You boys are going to be a fearsonse lot. You all have Alpha running through your veins and sometimes, that worries me." "Why?" I asked, stupefied.

Her smile wavered. "Because it's true. Each of you will grow to be very powerful wolves and even stronger men. In most cases, having more than one Alpha born to a pack means the wolves will separate. Either leaving one day to lead their own territories, or taking over another pack without a suitable Alpha male. In worst case scenarios, the males will fight to the death and the last wolf howling will be made Alpha

I gasped, "I don't want to leave! The twelve of us are best friends! And I would never want to hurt Domonic." I shrugged, blushing when Luna Lilly quirked an eyebrow in reminder of our fight just then. "Well, mean, not really, hurt him. But nobody's ever died from a black- She chuckled, "I know, and that's why I need you to make me a promise.

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Five

I puffed up my chest, nodding at her solemnly. "Anything Luna Lilly."

She leaned close to me, whispering so that none of the others could hear us from inside the packhouse, "When the time comes, and the twelve of you take over? Stay together. Never separate! You are going to need each other very much one day, and I fear what might happen if you grow apart. In leaving it up to you to remind them of his much stronger you are together. You are brothers, not friends

"Okay," I said, frowning at the sadness in her eyes. "I promise. But if I forget, will you remind me when the time comes?"

She smiled sadly, "It might not be me, but somebody will."

END MINI-FLASHBACK

Luna Lilly was always a very intuitive soul. She might even have been a bit psychic. After the fire five years ago, and we found out that our mothers were dead, that one conversation came floating back to me and I realized that she knew, Luna Lilly believed something bad was going to happen and did nothing to stop it. Sometimes that knowledge gets the better of me and I want to scream and shout to the Heavens. Thinking that if she was aware of the danger, that she should have told us. I mean, why wouldn't she give us the chance to at least try and save them?

But in reality, it makes no sense to be angry about it. There's no way to change the past. I miss Luna Lilly just as much as I miss my own mother, and truth be told, I kind of miss my dad too. But now, we have Draven, and if I'm being honest, she's becoming the perfect Luna. Just learning of her existence that day in the bar changed everything for me. When Domonic revealed his mate had found him I felt something like instant relief. A heavy weight was lifted from my heart and I knew that Draven was the somebody Luna Lilly had mentioned. The somebody who would remind us to stick together... the somebody that would teach us that we needed to love.

Glancing at my mate as I pull into the parking lot, I realize something. She is the only female that I've ever been afraid of. Not in the Jesus Christ, she is scary kind of way, but along the lines of the "What she doesn't like me enough way. She is the only girl that I have ever been nervous talking to. Honestly, her initial impression of me was correct. I have been a bit of a manwhore. You won't find a single establishment in all of Port Orchard that I haven't fucked in one way or another. Meaning I've had the waitresses, the clerks, the nurses, the sailors, bank tellers and teachers and even a few of the girls from my gym - I've even been with a few of Domonic's strippers. But none of them have ever made me feel anything for more than a ten minute interval.

Delilah... all she has to do is frown and I'm instantly replaying the last five minutes in my head and wondering what I might have done to damage her smile.

She's frowning right now. Shit,

"We're about an hour from Clatsop," she says. "And thirty minutes from my hometown, but okay, I get it. You must want to eat."

Shutting off the engine, I hear the almost inaudible sound of her stomach rumble and I want to laugh. She doesn't know I can hear that, but I'm glad that I did. "Are you going to act like you're not hungry, then?"

A saucy smile tips one side of her mouth and she blushes then lowers her head to say teasingly, "I just ate a little while ago, don't you

remember?"

Not fair! Not fucking fair. I hiss, in immediate pain as her words sink in and my balls try to climb up the base of my dick. Lilac, you little devil you. My hands lock around the steering wheel and I clear my throat, willing away the memory of her wet heat on my fingertips. Oh fuck, I haven't even washed my hands yet. Traces of her juices are probably still on my fingers and if I wanted to, I could probably taste her right POW

You are so going to pay for that," I promise with a dark chuckle.

There's something I didn't tell you," she chirps, throwing me the most bone worthy smile I have ever seen. Her wicked hazel blue eyes stroke over me slowly and I feel my muscles swell everywhere that she looks. As her pupils dilate, her arousal wafts my way and I swear to God it takes everything in me not to pass out from the sudden surge of blood in my loins. Im a vegetarian," she says seriously. "I never eat meat," she simpers flirtatiously, eyeing my zipper as it peaks rapidly over my ever growing package. "Not counting yours, I mean."

She did that on purpose, that I much is clear. Her sudden confidence is the fucking sexiest thing I have ever seen and I love that she likes to

2/3

08:54 Fri, Nov 15

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Five

toy with me. Oh fuck... she's evil and I'm going to have to feed her again ante if not just to teach her a lesson."

I'm just about to do that when her back suddenly goes ramrod straight, and her eyes lock on something on the other side of the window. 'Charlie?!' she shouts.

Then she leaps out of my car with almost bilaman speed and races into the restaurant without so much as a glance back. Chapter Comments

KKN

never a dull momenté

Jacqui Rossouw

You know we love it..

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,484 words]

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Six. DELILAH

Rushing past the two or three people waiting for a table and ignoring the glare of some twenty pound hostess, I head straight for the booth by the corner window. As I get closer, my steps falter. It's Charlie alright, but he doesn't look nearly as excited as he did this morning. In fact, he looks downright gloomy. He's seated behind a steaming mug of coffee and damn near crying into the cup. And where In the holy hell is Cane? The two of them only ever separate to take a plus.

What if those old fuckers hurt him? What if Came can't be here because het.....

Stop it Del, stop it. You would feel it if he were dead. At least, I hope I woahl

"Charlie?" I say, sliding into the other side of the booth just before the hostess taps me on the shoulder.

Charlie's soil brown eyes lift toward me and for a moment, it's almost as if he doesn't recognize me. His clothing is rumpled and there are a couple of fresh bruises just under his chin, telling me that I was right to worry about them. I can't stop the pasp that rushes forth, nor the yelp of fear that escapes when it does.

"D" Charlie exclaims, coming to life. He jerks forward slightly, coffee slashing out of his mug and onto the table. "H-how are you here? W we left you-h-how-

"A friend," I reply, a touch guiltily.

"A friend?" Charlie inquires quizzically. His eyebrows come together in disbelief and he scowls. "Since when do you have those?"

Despite my mounting fear for Cane, I release a short giggle. He's not wrong. "Since my brother and his dumb-dumb best friend left me to fend for myself in a pile of firewood."

Charlie frowns, his eyes moistening. "I'm so sorry about that D. We shouldn't have," he whimpers, lifting the unspilled coffee to his lips and taking a loud sip.

As I watch him, I notice his hands are shaking, and when his shirt rides back over his wrist, I see red ligature marks cuffing his flesh. The blazing trepidation I was working to keep at a simmer suddenly bails over and my body begins to buzz with dread. "Charlie," I hissed, reaching forward impulsively to take his hand in mine. "What the fuck happened to you two?"

underside of his carpal bone.

He tries to snatch his hand back, but I squeeze my grip tight, my eyes focusing on the tattered skin on the un "H-hey! L-leggo, he mumbles, but I don't and he snorts his displeasure like a five year old child.

"Where's Cane?" I snap and Charlie's face crumples into a mask of betrayal. Oh shit. Something is definitely up.

"He's with them," Charlie spews bitterly.

"What do you mean, he is with them? You mean they won't let him go? ts he hurt? Did you see them hurt him? What-"with... them," he clarifies slowly, his

"He's not hurt!" Charlie explodes furiously, spittle flying out of his mouth as his chin quivers. "He's..." eyes going wet again.

father

What the hell does that mean? Then it dawns on me... The Elder Few are a completely exclusive group. They hardly ever initiate new my members. You either have to be nominated by a one of their inner circle, or be a legacy applicant - which Cane would've been if had nominated him before he died. Being as Cane grew up in that place alongside the other sons, they must have decided to accept Cane's application on a technicality. Excusing him from nomination due to the circumstances behind my father's unexpected death. "Oh shit," I say sympathetically, taking Charlie's hands in mine. They didn't want you."

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Seventy filz

Charlie shakes his head wadulty, his pale face blessing will redan fights the pain of his jeton

Stroking his hands with more tendencies How I food, I allow my Tempe hot when I get a hold of your "Yer to actindly liter off, Lole him vehemently.

begin toning Furbing Comet Igng treat your ass like a

waitress steps up to the head per tapping on her head

"Are you two gonna rudely komething neue than offer? Hur mise su red this talde and this gory s been holding it up for the past hour

Holding up the table? What? I quickly scan the room and the fog wimpy bedhe and my head snaps her way. "We might, we might not I art rudely, glaring at the curvy female as trey Mama Bear rips free, I survey the

the other side, Really? Irritation clamors up my spine empty menu rack, then slice my gaze back toward her. He's only been taking up this table because her was waiting for me. I'm late. It's my

She sneers, rolling her eyes dramatically. "Well then, a po go order something or are you both going to leave?" Her gaze moves up and down Charlle scomfully, disgust twisting her features.

This overage hunky hatch. "It might help if your fat ass got us some mentis," I informed her.

She huffs, her mouths falling open in temporary shock before the growl, TI be right back with them."

"Make sure of it," I quip loudly,

Shir. Watch your mouth Delilah, She's not fat. Not really, she's thick, with a killer rack and an ass I would die for, but fuck her anyway. She's a cut, and a dry one at that. When someone mistreats my boys, I do have the tendency to get extremely petty and mean. I am the only due allowed to insult them. Nobody che. Because I'm the only one who knows their fucking stupidity is a congenital defect that the doctors neglected to treat at birth. Then, when you add the cans of soup I've nalled them with over the years, well... you can't really expect a couple scholars to emerge.

Charlie relaxes a hit, a small smile turning his lips as

blushes at me, "You shouldn't be so mean to her, D."

And why the fuck not? She's an asshole."

He shakes his head at my audacity. But shes also the one who gets to touch our food."

Dawn it. He's right. From time to time, I suppose the Doublemint Twins do show signs of promise. Little word vomit geniuses that they

When the waitress returns, she's toting two menus and a suspicious, way too bubbly, glass of water. My eyes narrow on the cup as she places it in front of me, studying it apprehensively before acknowledging that she spat in my shit. Giving her the evil eye, I snort. Im not goma drink it, bitch,

Answering my silent accusation with a chortle of barely contained laughter, she smirks, then winks.

Oh yeah. She did it. Fuck.

Eyeing the two menus, I suddenly remember who I left outside. "Wait!" I call out and... Mandy, as her name tag denotes, swishes her long black pony-tail in aggravation.

What? sh

she snaps, all pretense of civility le

last.

"We need one more menu, please. My friend should be joining us in a moment." I added the please just

"Fine," she barks, slapping another on the table with dramatic flourish.

Glancing

over my shoulder, I peer out the window toward where Quinn is parked, holding my breath as a small group of people walk past the windows, blocking my view. Once the sidewalk clears, my entire body seizes up. A bubbling rush of disappointment surges through me 2/3 Chapter One Hundred Seventy Gir

Systemy my myste

18e left. He canvas followed me inside, I should w known. I completely cliched him and so he must have decided to completely ditch me. Or,

● wasn't as leto jesu as you were starting to believe. Maybe he was del that I provided him with an easy out by hurting myself from his

opens up in

the fridge back at bú

chest and my eyes sting

just in case he ever in

This shoulder't hurt this way, I hardly know him. At least I me. Why didn't I ask him for his? I had the whole ride

ver to man-up and get it.

And who in their right mind sucks the dick of a male that

can't we call on later for references?

My ailway closes up and I stare, transfixed, out at the

wallowing back the burn of my being discarded is impossible for some pest parking lot. Simply lost.

Maybe he went for gas?

Come off it Delilah. You know better than that. You got duped is what happened. Congratulations, I hope you enjoyed eating at Que

fenly, looking at Charlie, I don't know what the fuck were going to do. I didnt realize it at the time, but I think I might have beeg counting on Quinn and his muscles for more than just a lift. I needed him. The strength of him. To save my brother from himself. And he's not out there.. Chapter Comments

Jacqui Rossouw

Sorry

.....but good. Let her suffer for just leaving Quinn like that. How rude.

Jacqui Rossouw

POST COMMENT

My guess was he moved the car....I didn't think he would spy.....but I guess that's understandable considering he has no clue about his mate who is associated to peopl...

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,522 words]

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Seven QUINN

Charlie? You can't be serious,

I watch from my seat as Delilah pushes through a small throng of people. She is being forceful and not uttering so much as a quick pardon me, before heading toward the back corner of the restaurant. Drawing herself up, she stops next to a corner booth, where a male about my age is seated. At first, she's simply staring at him, but I can tell she's nervous and that little detail bothers me more than I care to admit. You only get nervous like that when you care for someone. I should know, it's how I feel when I look at her. Suddenly, I'm feeling very, very sick.

I just had to stop for burgers, didn't I?

She didn't give me so much as a second look when she saw Charlie, Jus zoomed out of the car, Maximus forgotten. Then of course, there's the fact that she hasn't so much as raised her head in my direction. Not even once, not even to see if I followed her inside. Which is more than a little upsetting.

Fuck. Is it because I want her so badly that I'm the one that gets to suffer this way? Maybe I should've pretended I didn't want her, like Rainier did, or Domonic. Shit, that's right, Koda too. The three of them were wretched to their mates when they found them. Domonic lied to Draven and tried to force her to the other side of the country. Koda didn't even start to see the light until Emily was in coma, and Rainier arrested his girl for being a hooker. A HOOKER for Christ sake!!

But what happens for them? Everything. And me? I want nothing more than to make her mine and share absolutely everything with her. But what does she do? First, she tries to stand me up by catching the train out, and now....

My chest flares with pain as I gaze through the glass window and see that she's now sitting across from the slack jawed little punk. But that's not what causes the sudden hitch in my breath. Nope. It's the way she's stroking his hands that does me in. Swallowing something that feels like wet sand in my throat, I study this... Charlie. Light brown hair, dark brown eyes, slim build (well, slimmer than me), a very demanding forehead over an incredibly pointed nose, and if I'm not mistaken there are tears in his eyes. Is that what I need to do to get you to see me, Lilac? Do I need to cry? Is that what you're into?

Starting my car, I bite down so ferociously that I'm pretty sure I just heard a tooth crack. No worries, if I did, it will fall out and grow back within the hour. My eyes burn as I pull away from the spot to maneuver around back. Positioning my car behind the dumpsters, where no

is meant to park and where there aren't any windows at all, I step out of the car and into the restaurant.

ΠΠΕ

The moment I'm inside, a young hostess heads straight for me. She's got a menu in her hands and she bypasses two separate couples just to get to me. I shrug their way helplessly and they throw the girl a dirty look. "Party of one?" She asks in a smooth, seductive drawl.

I can't help, but grin, because it is what I'm good at. Picking up chicks and having them tripping over their feet to get to me. At least of them do. Apparently only the fated have the power to deny me.

"Yes," I answer, following the skinny Betty toward a private single bench seat in the back.

My table is across the room on the other side and exactly one row behind Delilah's. Good. This spot is perfect. I can see and hear everything For this point. Taking the menu from the hostess with a grateful smile, I return her flirtatious wink with one of my own. Oh what? She bailed on me. Let me in the car to help her precious Charlie get in touch with his feelings! Shit! Who is to say she didn't plan to meet him here? Maybe this entire thing was some fucking scheme to get an extra forty bucks, and free ride home. Except that I'm the one that picked this joint. She didn't even know I was stopping until we got h

here.

Okay... so she didn't scheme, but... I'm watching her and she still hasn't looked for me. The truth of it is almost enough to turn me into Charlie. Who by the way, has a much bigger forehead on this side of the glass than he does from my car window, 1/3 Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Seven

I would never have even dreamed of flirting with another woman if my hate was with her. This feeling... the one that I'm having every time Charlie smiles at her... it's not safe.

Not for him and not for me.

I watch as a voluptuous brunette waitress swaggers up to them and pretty much gives them the third degree. To my surprise, little Lilac doesn't take any of her shit and that only makes me want her more.

I tune into Delilah as she snaps, "We might, we might not! He's only been taking up this table because he was waiting for me. I'm late. It's my fault not his."

The fuck? Is it possible? Could she have arranged to meet him here? Maybe she didn't mention stopping at this place because she realized I was already headed for it. God help Charlie if she did, because I will rip him from balls to chin without even introducing myself first. The waitress groans and then asks, "Well then, are you gonna order something or are you both going to leave?"

"It might help if your fat ass got us some menus," Delilah retorts and despite that it's Pinnocchio that she's protecting, I laugh to myself.

"I'll be right back with them," the waitress snarls.

Delilah calls out, "Make sure of it." Jesus, my mate is just as fiery as I hoped she would be. The way I imagined when I first laid eyes on her in the woods.

Your mate? Are you sure about that? She's been in here over twenty minutes and still hasn't checked on you. You lost. Accept it.

Or... maybe I could reject her for the chance at a different one.

Even as the thought formed, I knew it was outrageous! A chance at another one? You mean one that is not Lilac? No. I could not accept that. Besides, I don't even know how. It was never the kind of knowledge that was passed around. Rejecting a mate, who is an actual gift from above, is not only disrespectful, but it's like telling the powers that be to ride on your dick.

A tall, bubbly blond waitress with the name Charlene written across her top sways over to me and asks, "Are you ready to order yet,

handsome?"

She's blocking my view. "No. Not yet. A few more minutes please," I snap coldly, rubbernecking around her to see what's going on. She flinches, "Fine."

Charlie's chuckles, "You shouldn't be so mean to her, D."

"And why the fuck not? She's an asshole."

"But she's also the one who gets to touch our food," he points

sout

Their waitress returns, to place two menus on the table and I finally feel my appetite completely sour, something that has never happened in life, I think I should just go home. Why am I torturing myself?

I hear Delilah shout. It almost feels like she's talking

alking to me and I freeze.

"What?"

the waitress snaps.

Delilah is exasperated when she explains, "We need one more menu, please. My friend should be joining us in a moment."

Friend... nice. How many other friends do you

swallow, Delilah?

2/3

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Seven

Keeping my eyes trained on her as she plastered her face into the glass to search the parking lot, I take a couple deep breaths to calm myself. I shouldn't be as thrilled as I am right now. It took her long enough! Fuck! I could have swam across the river and built a small island to remember I exist. Is Charlie's dick that fucking big? I mean, I guess it could be, his forehead definitely

is in the

When Delilah turns away from the glass she looks defeated and I finally allow myself to smile. Good. It's clear that she's upset now. Her body flushes red and her eyes dart everywhere. The road, the highway, the bridge, back to the parking lot. Her lower lip is even sticking out a bit and I suddenly want to suck it between my teeth and punish her for being so inconsiderate.

"What's the matter, D7 Charlie asks. "What's wrong?"

She doesn't answer, but I hear her breathing shudder as I stand and stalk in her direction. Charlie looks up at me as I approach, stiffening anxiously when he realizes I'm heading for their table.

He's afraid of me. Maybe today isn't going to be so bad after all.

"Exactly. What's wrong, Lilac?" I reprise, sliding into the booth next to her and stretching my arm possessively behind her shoulders.

Chapter Comments

KKN

real smooth quinn

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,924 words]

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Eight QUINN

Startling with a whimper, she turns her flawless features my way. The pout of her deliciously pink lips rounding out in surprise. "Quinn," she gushes, relief brightening her wickedly hued eyes. One dainty hand laws into my upper thigh and her body presses into me reflexively. A tremble rises and falls from her chest as her eyelashes flutter low and wanton. Noticing her scandalously placed hand, she twitches, embarrassed, "Oh shit Sorry! My bad."

Before she can remove said hand from my leg, I cover it with my own. Locking her fingers in place, I sent her a pointed look. "Don't be," I commanded. Don't you dare let me go, Mitle fire sprite. The desire to drag my hands through her soft and wavy, flame colored locks.rest, so I drop my hand onto her other side and begin stroking the skin of her exposed shoulders.

"Who are you?" Pinocchio grumbles from across the table.

Right.

Now I can give him my attention.

Delilah's wrist, tugging gently to slide her fingers between my thighs and seal them in. There you go. Facing his way, I put my hand on D Stay!

"Tim her meat," I say plainly, ignoring the furious blush that stains Delilah's cheeks. "My name is Quinn."

"Her meat?" Charlie repeats indignantly. "What the hell does that even mean?"

I smirk when I see the jealousy in his eyes. Charlie has definitely got a thing for Delilah, but does Delilah have a thing for Charlie? Most of the evidence I've seen so far would point to yes - but only, if you don't count the physical things. If Delilah hadn't gotten so visibly upset when she thought I had gone, I would crown Charlie the winner for sure. But... she did. And... she's my mate, so I know she at least feels something for me. The mate bond is said to be a powerful thing on both sides. Whether you are human or wolf. Now, I don't know what Charlie has on her and personally, I do not see match, but who knows? Maybe the more head forehead, beak bumping Charlie is hung like a moose and we've already seen that he has a sensitive side, so... Some ladies love that shit, causedon't know, it's the inside that counts... mmkay... right. Exactly.

I think I'm just going to have to outright ask her. Like... right now.

you

Settling a closed fist on the table in front of me, I squeeze and release it as many times as I need. It's a sort of nervous tick that I have when I'm pushing myself to do something uncomfortable, which I am, about to do. But before I can get the question past my lips, Charlie's eyes bulge and he begins to fidget.

Scowling at me with open disdain he asks, "What the hell are you? Like bodybuilder or something?"

"Something," I say coldly, meeting the warning in his gaze with one of my own. Oh yeah, he's in love with her.

*He's my friend, Charlie. I met him in the creek this morning after you and Cane left me for dead," De

In the ribs.

Delilah explains snarkily, elbow.

Test your friend?" Charlie asks, eyeing me warily.

"Uh-well-y-yes. Just a friend," Delilah stammers, her eyes suddenly glued to the menu in front of her.

I'm furious at first, but then I have to consider... could she still be feeling insecure? She definitely looked a little heartbroken when she thought that I was gone. Maybe she doesn't know what to call me. So, I decided to clarify. "We are not just friends," I state quietly, unable to keep my face from tensing with anger. At least, I'm not."

Delilah bites her lip with a sigh, but doesn't say anything else. Disappointment crushes through me for a moment, but then I feel something that almost shoots me up and out of the booth. Delilah's hand has migrated quite a bit deeper than my thighs, and is now

1/4

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Eight

rhythmically pumping me over my jeans. Although I'm able to bite down on a low groan, I cannot, however, keep from of the table as pleasure begins to snake through me

"If wants to be just friends, then thats what you will be," Charlie burls at me in a sudden moment of hear

et of my lips, should

rapid pace against her

At this point, all I can do is nod in agreement. Words would be a very laid idea. They would not be what came mouth happen open. My hips buck slightly beneath the table, completely on their own, as my dick engorges at palm. I almost beg for mercy, it's that good. Shuddering to maintain control, I reach down and rip her hand away from me. This is a public restaurant and while it normally wouldn't matter to me, I'm not banging her for the first time in a burger joint bathroom. As it is, I'm a literal three seconds away from fucking her right here on this formica tabletop. With Charlie, Charlene, and the sexy fat ass waitress

looking on in envy.

Delilah continues to pretend to read the menu, a slow smile creeping over her lips as she releases a low chuckle.

I hope you know what you've done, Lilac," I whisper under my breath. "When I get you alone, you're going to regret that."

She snickers, attracting Charlie's suspicious eye.

"Hello there, friend," the waitress chirps coyly, as she finally descends on our table. Her attention is for me alone, and the only reason it doesn't bother me is because I can see that it bothers my Lilac. "You look ready to order. What can I get for you? You can have anything you want. Whether it's on the menu or not, she flirts, her eyes dancing across my chest and shoulders hungrily.

I take a quick peek at Delilah, relishing in the possessive fire I see behind her eyes. She and Mandy are locked in a staredown, a battle of witches. Neither of them seems to be winning.

E clear my throat. "Mandy love, do you have any veggie burgers? Because my friend right here is very particular about her meat," I

smoothly.

Fifteen minutes later, two of us are chowing down on a couple of all beef, double patty, double cheese, double deal burgers and the other is picking woefully through the saddest excuse for a garden burger I've ever seen. To be fair, the way Delilah's sandwich looks was enough to turn me off.

"I'm fucked," she hissed, pulling a long black hair

out from under the bun.

Charlie bursts into giggles, some of his food shooting out of his mouth. "I told you to be nice, D."

She rolls her eyes, snatching up the gray fat of faux pas and lettuce in one hand and nailing the boy in his enormous forehead. "Fuck you,

Charlie."

I grin, unwrapping my second burger gleefully, then inspecting it for tampering. It's perfect, just as I suspected it would be, so I slide it onto Delilah's plate.

"What's this," she asks, with a rueful smile and a wag of her eyebrows.

That's

my veggie burger... that I ordered... for you," I inform her.

She smirks at me before darting forward to kiss the side of my face. "Thank you," she says sweetly.

My body is now jammed. Stuck, Immobile. I'm felled by the simplest of kisses and even though it was quick and easy... and incredibly chaste, I can still feel the soft petals of her lips on my face. As she begins to eat, I can't look away from her. The way she daintily tears off the edges of the bun before devouring the rest of it like a rabid beast, is charming as hell. At least it is to me it is.

Forcing my gaze forward, I study Charlie and his unhappy glare. As he raises his arms to take the final bites of his food, I notice the marks on his chin and the lines around his wrists. They're fresh. From today, I'm sure. But where did he get them? Who tied him up? "What happened to your chin, Charlie," I inquire. "And your wrists?"

2/4

08154 Fri, Nov 15

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Eight

Charlie's face flushes with shame. It don't matter. I don't want to talk about it."

"Huh," I mumble. Then I hope you have somewhere to go,

because we most definitely do

Charlie stiffens, his eyes

widening in

in alarm. "You're leaving, D7 I thought "

"I have to get to Cane, Charlie. I have to get him out of that place," Delah whispers.

Charlie shakes his head, an irritated frown on his face. "He won't leave, You're an idiot if you think he will." Charlie chuckles in astonishment, then snarls, "When they decided that he cuts off, clenching his teeth in anger. "When they told me that I couldn't be one of them. That I could never be. I waited in the lobby for Cane. I was so fire that he was going to come charging out those doors and that he and I would head back to you. But... Charlie's eyes fill with tears and in an attempt not to snap, or laugh, I face Delilah. This kid is in T desperate need of a little GI training and if I have to watch him have one more meltdown Im going to give it to him. Not that I have any myself.

"But?" Delilah prompts gently, completely under his spell.

Oh for the love of God.

Charlie's eyes glazed over, his lower lip quivering. "He came out alright, Roman was right behind him."

"Roman?!" Delilah gasped and Charlie nodded.

"I was actually relieved at first. Never in a million years did I think my best friend would..." he chokes off again.

I can't take much more of this. "Would what, Charlie? Would what? For fucks sake, spit it out."

"Quinn!"

nn!" Delilah scolds me, trying to shove me out of the booth in anger, Naturally, I don't budge and she growls. "Stupid muscles!" she

spits.

"Come on! He shouldn't be sad about this, Lilac. Trust me, coddling him won't help." I focus on Charlie, meeting his eyes harshly. "You should be angry, Charlie. Not sad. So tell me. What did he do?",

Charlie sucks in a deep breath. "He hit me," he admits. At first, I didn't know why. I thought maybe I made some error, or accidentally broke one of their weird little rules. But Then I heard Roman. He was barking orders at him! Riling him up! Saying stuff like, 'He's not one of us! You're one of us! Stamp him out! Show him who your family is. Then Cane hit me again. And again. And again... until I dropped. But that wasn't even the worst part. Charlie sat back, his face twisting into a snarl. "The worst part was when I looked up at him, at Cane." Charlie shuddered, staring directly at Delilah as he said, "You should have seen his face, D. He didn't look like Cane. He looked like a demon,

Like a monster. And then... he gave me these." Charlie grimaces, pulling up his sleeves to show us what marred his skin above the rope burns.

Fucking

bel. I was stunned.

"Holly shit!" Delilah whimpered, her hands going over her mouth in shock. "Tell

Cane didn't do that to you. Charlie, please. Tell me

"He did do it, D! He did! He took his fucking hunting knife and peeled three by two inch sections out of each of my forearms! Then they tied me up and he and Roman dumped me in the river! I almost drowned! That was this morning! Right after you talked to me!" "We have to go! We have to get to him now!" Delilah hissed.

Charlie shook his head. "You don't get it, D. He and Roman already left. They've gone to catch that shifter."

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,781 words]

Chapter One Hundred Eighty ELDER ROMAN

My private collage in Western Idaho has been my secret hideaway for hrs. It comes in handy when I have... special work to do. It's hide up on the mountain, near the cut of the tiber and nestled deep within the forest, it is my private hunting ground. The one place Lam completely comfortable and content to be my trae sell. No one knows where it is. Not even those old fucks back in Oregon. Well, no one Anew, but that all changed today

Upon my return to Oregon, I was presented with young Cane's dilemma, He wanted to pledge his life to the Elder Few, like his father did before him, and his father before him, and so on. Ninety percent of our members have sons, and out of that ninety percent, eighty percent might get accepted. But only the oldest som is ever considered for menilership, nudess, that son chooses not to pledge, or the younger son issues a challenge to the eldest and proves himsell the more worthy hunter, Cane is Halley's eldest, as well as his only son, but he wasn't nominated for membership before Ralley died. So, it was left up to me test and weigh him for membership.

A Pledge is usually given a physical abilities test, a marksmen test, an aptitude test, and then finally, the most difficult of all, a resolute detachment test. A test designed to fracture the faint of heart.

I have known Cane for ten years of his life, so I chose to forgo the unimportant exercises and focus solely on the only one that truly mattered. To be honest, I didn't believe he would do it. No one did. The RD test is structured to present the Pledge with an impossible choice. Most of the time they are asked to shoot the family pet, or if there isn't one, the Pledge is given an animal and told to end its life in the most gruesome way possible, using only their bare hands. Human subjects aren't normally used, but I knew sacrificing his best friend would be the ultimate task.

honestly didn't think he had it in him, but by God, did he prove me wrong. The only other member to ever pass a test as difficult as that

one, was me.

new apprentice, which basically makes him my son now. At least, it does in the eyes of the Elder Few.

So, naturally, I chose him for my new a

I have finally found someone that shares my intense love for the hunt. Someone willing to go the extra mile, and cut all former ties. Someone to teach, someone to mold. A student that will carry on with my work, long after I have passed. An heir, if you will, that I can leave my legacy to and share my truths with. Well, most of them. He will know all that he needs to and that will be enough. He is the first and last that I will ever take under my wing,

My secrets keep themselves pretty well, anyway. I made certain of that yours ago.

I watch my new apprentice with growing pride. He's pulverizing every target I set for him with astonishing accuracy. Not quite as well as I can, of course, but that's to be expected. He is human, after all. Humans can only do what they can do, and sadly, that isn't much. But I will teach this one everything he needs to know about all shifters and what they are capable of. Then, he will help me eradicate them. As many as are possible. One must learn the skills of each shifter they are hunting before an attempt at a snare can be made. Each species has its own unique supernatural ability and strength. They cannot be effectively hunted unless one understands what these are.

For example, leopard shifters in Asia. They prefer to spend most of their days in feline form and are known throughout the forests to beautiful beyond measure as humans. But they are a solitary species, often choosing not to take a mate. Those cats can climb so well, that they are more comfortable in the trees than they are on the forest floor. In fact, high up in the treetops is often where they station themselves for the hunt and even sleep, or take their meals. They are incredibly fast when leaping from tree branch to tree branch, and are almost phantolike. But on the ground, they can be easily trapped or caught.

In order to beat one, you must become as much like one as possible, and that takes time. But I'm up for it. I have faith in this kid's potential. I can train him in my own image. Teaching him how to track, skunk, deflect, shield how to move within nature, how to hide in plain sight. The skills that I will equip him with will ensure his survival the same way they have ensured mine. He will be independent of others, with no ties to anyone but me and when the time is right, we will be an unstoppable force. No one knows shifters the way that I do. Hunting them is an art, not a pastime. Not a fucking club activity, despite what some may believe.

None of the other hunters that wanted to learn were ever able to pass my test. But this boy, he did. Complete and total devotion to the

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Eighty

cause. You can't pay that kind of commitment. Believe me, I've tried.

As the last target explodes in the distance, he hoots in victory and coros jogging my way.

"Great job," I say, granting him a round of applause.

"How long before we can go after her?" he asks,

Ever the eger beaver, this one...

"Don't be so hasty," I tell him, secretly pleased that he wants to go back. Not many hunters will risk it after they've been exposed the her pride will likely be waiting for exactly that."

"Her pride?" he shouts. "You think there are more of them?"

I smirk, thinking back to that night a few years ago when I took out the den mother. Even now, her head is mounted o

compound. Each of us Elders has a wall, dedicated to our kills. Mine is definitely the most interesting. Ton shifte

their pride. They don't cast out their kin like wolves do, nor do they survive well on their own. A lonely lion is a dead. They are fersome, loyal creatures and they never leave a debt unpaid. They will remember you, and they will be waiting" They will remember me as well

"Shit," he curses. "You don't think it's a mistake to wait? What if they relocate?"

I have to chuckle at that. "Lions are more territorial than even wolves are, at times. They aren't going anywhere, and t would they? They aren't scared of you. They aren't scared of anyone. They love freely and openly, sometimes having multiple "Mates?"

I grin, my eyes dimming as an old wash of dead pain resurfaces, but I stamp it down where it belongs. Drowning it with my hatred. T

Mates. Often times, human mates."

"Gross!" he croaks in disbelief.

"No, no. Not gross." Try as I might, I can't keep the sneer from my lips. "It's weak is what it is."

"I can't imagine it. It can't be true,"

"Oh, it's true. And believe me when I say, you'll be grateful that they have them. The capture of a shifter's mate is the ultimate bargain chip. Their most exploited weakness. Kill the mate and kill the shifter. I study him, watching for signs of discomfort when I say, "Even the mate is human, sometimes it is the only way. A sacrifice must be made for the greater good. Don't you agree?"

He stares into the woods then nods. "Justice. I get it. Humans who mate with animals. It's unnatural. They deserve what

suppose."

I can't smile wide enough hearing that. Excellent attitude. You're going to practice with moving targets tonight. And not just any moving targets. They will be quick. Supernaturally fast. You need to learn how to take aim and shoot for a creature that's zig-zagging through the woods, hitting speeds of ninety miles an hour. You must learn to predict their direction based on their speed, and how to spot the slight waver in the brush, that signals when they are charging toward you."

"Do they really run

that

t fast?" he ad

he asks, shocked.

I chuckle. "Some of them, but not many. It is my philosophy to prepare for what has yet to come my way before it does. I like to be more than ready. Blackjack has some of the fastest wobs I have ever seen."

"Wolves?" His eyes flare wide with excitement. "Out there? Are they regular-

2/3

Chapter One Hundred Eighty

They're shifters and they are ge

"No shit?"

I nod. "Oh yes."

"Do the rest of the Elders know?"

I laugh heartily. "Most of the Elders cannot be trusted with that information. Telling them would only ensure their deaths. Those men? Not one of them would stand a chance. Which is why I need you to be ready. You, and you alone, have the potential to join me on these missions. You should have come to me the moment you decided to take the Elder path. You should have approached me right after your father died." "I didn't think I could," he admits, honestly. "My sister... she..."

Dania. My balls ache at the mere mention of his sister and I wince slightly, I had hoped to see that the curvy little firecracker was with him. Especially now that her father is gone and no longer in my way. "Your sister. Ah, yes. I think I remember her. Delia, was it?"

"Delilah," he corrects me, rubbing the back of his neck sheepishly. "She-uh- well, she hates you. She was always telling me that you were evil and that you couldn't be trusted."

I smile bright, ignoring the sudden rage in my loins upon hearing that. That fucking little bitch "Well... you know better, don't you? I leave it to you to straighten her out. You are the man of the family now. She is not beyond discipline. It's your responsibility to make sure she honors your beliefs, not hers." I declare with a smile, "Come on, let's have dinner and then tonight, we practice with live targets

Then I will locate your bitch of a sister and I will show her just how evil can truly be.

"Where are we going to find that kind of action?"

I grin, clapping an arm over his shoulder. "Now that my young padawan, is a surprise."

POST COMMENT

Chapter Comments

KKN

yuck, hes more than just evil

Marietta Gary

Can we call a spade a spade here? He's worse than a piece of sh!t. I want to go after him myself.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,677 words]

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-One

DELILAIL

My head snaps forward at the sound of Elder Matthew's wice and I immediately think unaware that a member of the Elder Few is here.

And, he's also alive, when they probably intended for him to die.

"Delilah?" Elder Matthew says again.

Shir, shit, shir

"Y-yes! Hi! Matthew!" I say, peering over Quinn's broad shoulders and smiling as brightly as my hate will prattle, making small talk while I try and figure out what to do.

Matthew's eyes are twinkling with merriment as he studies my features, only darkening when they to the onion of Quin "Who might this young man be? Matthew inquires nosily. "Um-" I mumble, stilling Quinn when he tries to turn around, and casting him a pointed look. Charlier I try and sey with a eyebrows arch upward in confusion and I groan, shit! This is my "

ck, bumping into the parked "Fiance!" Quinn finishes for me, whirling on Matthew so quickly that the old buzzard stumbles

right that I am completaty him. Placing his imposing form directly in front of me, Quinn manages to somehow push back just from view.

T

see," Matthew condescends, with a sne

a snort. "What might your

se be, young man?"

Quinn's muscles were flexing in irritation, I could see them rippling along his back through the thin fabric of his shirt. "Mezmun," he tells Matthew, and I grin behind him stupidly. "Maximus Quinn." "Maximus Quinn," Matthew repeats, as if committing the name to memory

"A powerful name, Maximus. Are you and your family from Oregon? Matthew asks, but Quinn doesn't get younger, much more vexing voice sounds at the forefront.

"Fiance?" I know who it is without even looking. Ted Barrows. Elder Matthew's favorite son. And yes, I say favorite. All the Elders that have more than one son, have their favorites. They make no secret of it, either. That's strange, dad. Did the council vote on a marriage for What the fuck? Fuck you, Ted. You smuke

"Not that I'm a

aware," Matthew croons haughtily.

Well then she's not engaged." Ted states flatly, and by the sound of things, I can tell he's now standing closer. "You see, Maximus, Ted explains as if he's talking to a small child. "Delilah and her family are longtime members of our church, and as our way of life demands, the council has to approve all marriages of each and every female:*

The council must approve of all marriages?" Quinn laughs. "Is that like a fantasy football thing? Because I can assure you, my female does not need their permission."

My body heats and my core pulses. The absolute conviction in Quinn's voice, making me wish his words were true. I know he's only trying to anger them, but I suddenly want more than anything to be his

Ted cackles, and without even looking I know what Quinn sees when he does. Ted has a very prominent, very bulbous, Adam's apple

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-One

juts up and down whenever he foughs. It's the one thing about him that he's handsome. Well, that, and his personality. Ted is also pretty well built. Out of all of the sons of Elders, I'd say he's probably the strongest. But, from what I can see beyond Quinn's

shoulders, he hasn't gotten much bigger. And Quinn... well... Quinn's body is a masterpiece One look at him and you know he can pretty much squash you like

So, I don't know what is prompting Ted to test fate, but I have the sudden desire to see him on his ass, so I hope he keeps going.

"Your female? Ha. That's funny. Especially because I'm pretty sure her other Cane, is the head of her family now, and she belongs to him until he chooses someone to give her to. It's the way of our church. All members must adhere to the traditions." Well, good thing I'm not a member then, dickwad.

God? If I'm allowed to wish anyone ill in my lifetime, might I choose Ted? He's a douche...

"Your church?" Quinn questions sardonically. "Is that what they're calling cults these days?"

Oh... oh shit... Despite the accuracy

of Quinn's statement, the Elder Few have always hated that label.

"Excuse me?" Ted replies, appalled. "If I were you I'd watch my mouth.

Quinn has just inadvertently implied that I've been talking to outsiders about their exclusive little club. Which is a big, Elder Few no-no. Not that I care. But, if I were an actual member, like my father was, they would punish me, maybe even kill me. However, I'm not - I don't know enough about the inner workings of their circle to be considered a threat anyway.

Quinn chuckles and the sound is slightly bone chilling. "If you were me you'd do no such thing," Quinn promises, the muscles of his arse twitching and tightening deliciously. "And if you were me you'd know why." Quinn's hands suddenly close into fists at his sides. "I can demonstrate for you, if you like? But I'd hate to see you embarrass yourself in front of your daddy. So, it's your call."

-

Chi mama.

Now I'm actually grateful that Quinn is forcibly blocking access to me, because I think I might be drooling.

the

Ted chuckles, but I can hear the sudden twinge of fear in it when he does. "Whatever." He speaks over Quinn's shoulder to me and for the first time in two years, I'm forced to

look him in his wicked green eyes again. "I spoke to Cane this morning, Delilah. I made it pretty clear to him what I intended." Quinn's muscles ripple across his back, in such a way that almost make them look bigger. Like they are growing or coiling into something stronger. The sight is startling, but hot as hell and I am suddenly desperate to touch him.

Quinn tilts his chin, side eyeing me with his intense gold eyes. For some reason, they almost seem to swirl with a vibrant yellow. What the fuck? The moment I think I see it, it disappears. His jaw is set, a muscle flexing in his cheek, as it seems, he works to control his anger.

"So, have your fun with her while you can... Maximus, Ted whispers, pulling out of earshot of his father. "But I'll be taking her off your hands soon enough, and when I do, I'm going to breed her like a damn mare."

I swallow my gasp, the sudden popping of muscle, my only clue that Quinn is about to attack him. I didn't want to do this right now, I wanted to get out of here and go find Cane. Knowing what was about to happen would ultimately cost us more time, I spring into action. Leaping up as best I can, without slamming my head into the roof of the Escalade, I throw my arms around Quinn's neck. Planting my hands over the front of his panty juicing pectorals, I tug him backward as best I can. Right as Quinn's arm goes flying upward to grab Ted. I bite him in the back of the neck, Hard,

Quinn's entire body shudders and his weight nearly topples back into me. "Lilac," he hisses, the sound thrumming with pleasure. Then he clasps his hands over the top of mine, sealing them to his chest.

My jaw

clenches and I suck on the flesh I just mangled, not wanting to come away from him without soothing whatever damage I just Tased to his skin. My tongue traipses over the dozen or so toothmarks swirling across the edges as they quickly disappear. What....the... hell? Whatever I'm doing seems to be working almost like magic, so I continue to suck and kiss him along the back of his neck.

2/3

08:55. Fri Nov 15

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-One

"Jesus Christ, Lilac, Fuck," Quinn moans loudly, causing Elder Matthew to avert his gaze and stumble toward the sidewalk along the

restaurant's entrance.

"Lilac Ted flinches with disgust and anger, but by the time his eyes lit to mine there's something else in their depths. Lust. His excitement appears painfully evident and the bulge in the front of his pants doubles in size.

LOL But even doubled, Ted's got nothing on the man beneath my lips.

Ted swallows nervously, licking his lips as he steps backward. "Have some respect, Del, he snaps scornfully. "Do the two of you normally fuck in the parking lots for the entire world to see?"

I finally pull my mouth away from Quinn, blushing when he grunts in protest. Smiling down at the purple hickies I just left behind, I focus on Ted. "No, of course not," I snark, biting my lip when I feel Quinn's teeth nip at my hand on his chest. "We usually just pull onto the side of a highway and do it in the trees, I say without even the tiniest bit of shame.

Elder Matthew's jaw practically unhinges, it drops so low. The old man is absolutely scandalized.

Quinn's chest quakes with quiet laughter and Ted's eyes bulge as if someone just closed an arm around his neck. He's ripe with jealousy, glowering at my hands on Quinn's chest as he licks his lips, before finally stepping away.

Wait a minute, I still need to know what the hell Elder Matthew is doing here? This for from Clatsop?

"Wait a minute Ted!" I call out, ignoring Quinn's angry hiss of protest.

What is it, Delilah?" Ted asks witheringly.

He is now standing next to his father and before I ask my question, I watch Matthew scan the people in the restaurant with obvious interest

"I don't have all damn day, Del!" Ted snaps.

I take a deep breath. "I thought you hated Washington. What are you and your dad doing all the way out here?"

And that's when I hear it. The little bell above the restaurant door. And... because I understand exactly what kind of relationship that I have with the Universe, I know that it has got to be Charlie standing there.

I swallow, trying to play it cool just in case Ted and Matthew weren't around for what happened to Charlie this morning. Hoping that all the two of them wanted, was a burger, and they don't even know who Charlie is. But, of course, hope is for fools.

"Hello again, Charlie," Elder Matthew says.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,167 words]

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Two DRAVEN

When the doorbell rings, I fainted over the toilet, having experienced a brand new kind of morning boss that just seems to bigar out. Damonic lovers above me, waking like fan might jump out of skin art attend I appreciate that he wants to tolly would rather las got the track cut when I yok.

take pa,

"Domonic," I grumbled, resting my aching head against the cord goreel seat that manents wyn, was the bed a different vid worship, "someone I

I heard it balry, but I'm leaving you here dying, he lisses, rubbing mad.

"I'm not dying, Idor!! 1 snap, shoosing hils meddlesome hands away. "Gp and answer the door! I want to know who it ir

"It's not my dad, baby, so don't worry about the door."

"Domonic," I groan. "I love you. I do. But sometimes, you are an idiot. Please. The longer you stand here, the less I want to watch and fucking need to rotch! So go and answer the door. For the love of God. Please."

I know who is and war don't want any. So no!

"Olu for fuck's sake," I cry. "Tease let me puke in peace. I don't want you watching me."

Tack that. I want to be here for everything my baby puts

s you through.

Tine," 1 growl as a wave of anger washes over me. So great is my fury, that I think my eyes might be as red as the fires of hell. With a final shout of warning I reach out and snatch his balls in my hand, squeezing them like a vice, zero tenderness in my grip. He makes a noise that is half squawk, half groan, then bunches forward in pain. "Drawn, no! Fuck! I won't leave e you."

"Get the fuck out! I screech, releasing him to turn around and let loose with a stream of orange goop. The sound of my retching bounces across the bathroom walls and Domonic drops down to the floor next to me. He rubs my back as the last of the bile drips down into the

Suddenly, his scent climbs over me, surrounding me, invading my senses... and just like that... my nausea is gone.

Oh! Oh my God! That's nice...

"Domonic," I whisper, falling weakly against him and burying my face in his chest. I rub my face across his shirt, breathing in tremendous amounts of him, as much as I can get. "Domonic, I love you."

"Baby," he says, somewhat exasperated. I love you too, but did you really just wipe your vomit all over my shirt?

"Just shut the fuck up," I say, "I want you to hold me and never let go. Please. Please, hold me"

"Of course, baby. But you do remember Felix is waiting at the docks, right?"

"Shut up.

Just quiet, just hold me," I insist weakly. "You're not to let me go until I'm satisfied.

"Baby," Domonic coos, stroking my back. "You know I have to be in Blackjack soon. Why don't you brush your teeth and I'll get you some crackers for the trip."

It's your scent that does it," a deep, languid voice sounds from just beyond the doorway. "Crackers won't do anything for a shifter pregnancy. However, raw beef will. That, and your scent are the only things that can help her when she's nauseous." 1/3

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Two

remember imiting you to just waltz inside my house. How did you get in here?"

here? He come back?! I mean, I know he said he would, but I honestly didn't know if he would.

Go? Hrs here? He com

to get happy when he shows up. HE LEFT YOU.

he come back the little girl inside of me says.

1 transformed into a bat and floated in through the chimney," Gio joked and I laughed into Domonic's shirt, despite myself.

"First of all, we don't have a chimney, and secon

second-you owe me a

we me a new lock, Domonic growled. "You have no business here."

"I do if she wants me here," Gio says. "And whether she does or not, she deserves to know the truth of why I left. She deserves to know who she i. and so do you. So I will not be leaving her again, unless she asks me too."

"Fine," Domonic states. "But if you upset her even once, or you break any more promises to her

"Domani" I protest, but he ignores me.

wear to God, I'll rip you limb from limb."

Gio chuckles, and its a sound that rings so greatly of a past long forgotten, that I shiver. Is it possible that I blocked out all my good memories of him and my real mother? Could I truly have felt betrayed enough to wipe them from my memories? Somehow I think the answer is Yes, I could have and yes, I did.

Suddenly, I want to hear everything. I want my memories back. The good ones.

them back

I want to know about my mother. I want to know who Isabel really was and why Gio left me with her. I have to hear it all.

Releasing Domonic, I turn to face Gio, who looks every bit as distinguished and perfectly groomed as he did the last time he you like yachts?" I ask him, and I feel Domonic tense against me,

here. "Da

Gio smiles, his liquid gold eyes flashing with something I can't quite recognize. "I love yachts. I own three. You loved them too. From the time you could walk."

Taking a deep breath, I decided to take the plunge. "You were worried about us heading to the island without Taedora, right?" m I ask

Domonic.

His eyes narrow as he nods slowly. "Yes... but I told you, Bart and Grant offered to stay back with you ladies."

"Well they don't have to. You need them with you for this. They're going, I say, assuming command and pushing myself up off the floor. Ignoring the wary look that Domonic is giving me, I turn to face Gia. There have been some break-ins at the pack's bar and hunter attacking in the mountains. The kind of men that hunt for shifters," I inform him and he nods as if he already knew that. Domonic want! me and the rest of the females on the island where it's safe."

"A solid plan, Gio says, shooting Domonic a look of approval. "But you should still have protection."

"Exactly," I say, biting my lip. "So I was thinking, that since you came to talk and I have to leave that you

"I would love to, Draven. La mia piccola bambina," Gio says softly.

Again, a shiver travels over me, but this time... it seems to come from somewhere else. "Those words..." I say, almost remember hearing them from somewhere else."

nods sadly. "Bianca. She loved you very, very much."

tears

rs filling my eyes. "I can

2

Chapter One Hundred Eighty Two

I allow thrkly, almost afraid to neh my next question, Toweever, he se

I try to tell myself not to be disappointed, had it doesn't do any good. The

He nb, Ves: It does

"How did she die? I ask sadly.

His face darkens, his eyebrows drawing together with pain. He wisspers Chapter
Comments

KKN

I am OBSESSED w this novel

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,556 words]

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Three

QUINN

Flick

Damn it Charlie...

I feel Delilah tense behind me the moment the bell over the restaurant door sings with Charlie's arrival.

"Charlie! We've been looking everywhere for you, ma boy, the old man says, his voice dripping with phony cheer.

Charlie's face is a mask of fear. I can see him trying to control his reaction to the two men now carefully converging on him, but despite his valiant efforts to appear unfazed, he looks frightened as hell.

The dumbfuck, Elder Matthew's son, smiles wide and fake, his teeth damn near twinkling in the sunlight, "The council has had a change of heart, Charlie."

Fidgeting with his freshly bandaged forearms and holding a roll of gauze in his hands, he starts to back away until he stumbles, barely catching himself along the wall of the restaurant.

"Quinn," Delilah whispers behind me.

Do they know how well you know Charlie?" I ask her as quietly as I can, my eyes trained on the father and son duo as they approach trembling Charlie.

"T-I don't know," she says. "Maybe not."

"Stay in the car and unlock the backdoor for Charlie. I'll take care of this," I whisper.

"W-what do you m-mean?" Charlie stammers, the sweat on his brow easily visible with my enhanced eyesight.

"No!" Delilah growls. "They're probably armed! Those weirdos always have some kind of weapon on them."

I spin around to face her, still keeping my cars tuned into Charlie, as a smile slightly at the worry in her gaze. "Try and trust me, Lilac," I say, grabbing the back of her head and pulling her face in for a quick kiss, before I save her little admirer's life. Oh shut. That's delicious.

Her breath hitches when our lips meet, and although it's the quickest kiss she'll ever get from me, that doesn't make it any less powerful. The warm energy that sparks against my lips when they touch hers sends a pulsing awareness through me and I groan. Backing away from her, I gasp in amazement. So that's what it feels like... That's how you know... Is it even possible to love someone you've just met? I think!

yes, yes it is.

Delilah's eyes appear glossy and dazed... even a little confused as she watches me. She touches her hand to her mouth in wonder and I know she felt it too.

That is my mate. I know it... and soon... she'll know it too.

"Unlock the backdoor," I mouth and she nods.

Turning back around, I study the hunters and their movements, grimacing when I see that Delilah is correct. Young dumbfuck has a firearm in his waist band. I can see its outline and the way his hand hovers over the area doesn't bode well for Charlie. I approach them as silently as I can from behind, praying that Charlie doesn't give me away as I do.

1/3

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Three

"The commell has decided to extend an invitation of membership to you after all," young dumbfuck says smoothly, it's such an obvious lie that even Chattle shakes his head in disbelief, "N-not I don't think so, Chulle says, and for a moment I'm proud of the little jerk. "You guys are crazy! You turned my best friend against me! I don't want to be part of that, Yorie all nuts!"

"Well... It really is a shame you feel that way, Charlie, Matthew says, closing his hand over Charlie's shoulder. "We're still gonna need you to come with us though. We have a few things we need to discuss with you."

I stop two feet behind them and meet Chulle's terrified eyes. "Get in the car, Charlie. I'll take care of this."

Dumbfuck whirls on i

on me, his face twisted in anger until he realizes just how big I am. I guess the fact that I was a little hunched over when sitting in the car never factored in for him until, just now. It's almost as if he does a double take before he opens his dumb fat mouth. "Stay out of this, Maximous. This is between Charlie and my family."

"Charlie, get in the car," I repeat, my gaze steady on the little man in front of me. The one who thinks he can threaten to breed my mate and keep all his teeth. The moment he said those words to me, I knew I was going to shake a few rocks from his mouth. Delilah distracted me from it for a moment, but I still intended to touch him up before we drove away.

"Let me go!" Charlie shouts, shoving Elder Matthew hard enough to steal his son's attention for a moment.

ng him as he races for my car.

"Hey!" Dumbfuck shouts, reaching for Charlie and missing

I reach out too, but I catch my fish, snagging him by the back of his shirt and spinning him around like a ballerina before I send the full throttle of my fist into his grill. Now... the fact that I didn't let go of the idiot's shirt when I sent my knuckles into his mouth, probably made it quite a bit more painful, both for him and me, but I didn't mind. The satisfying crack that I heard as two of his front teeth broke free of his gums was worth some ragged skin over my knuckles. Dumbfuck dropped like five hundred pound gorilla, his face splattered with blood and his head bouncing off the concrete.

Matthew screamed his son hit the pavement and I glared. "Calm down." I snapped. "He'll live. He's still got his molars," I say, as I kneel clown in front of the prick. The little bastard was dazed, but he was still conscious... pity, So I lean in close and say, "That's for thinking you will ever touch my girl. And, just so you're aware... If I ever see you anywhere near her, ever again you'll lose more than a few teeth." Then I rullie his hair and stand to leave.

"You son-of-a-bitch!" Matthew hollers and I hear a gun cock behind me, but I keep walking. "Til kill you!"

To my surprise, my car is already running and I send my Lilac a grateful smile even as I can see she's trembling with fear. As I reach for the door handle, three gunshots sound behind me, but I pay them no mind. Keeping a straight face, I leap inside my vehicle and yell, "Get down!" Which, thankfully, both Lilac and Charlie do. As I peel out of the parking lot a cacophony of a few more bullets follow me, ricocheting off my back bumper and the rims of my tires.

"Oh my God!" Charlie screeches from the back floorboard. "Those people are crazy!"

"Stay down," I say to both of them. "I'll tell you when you can get up." Then, I dial Rain and let rings once and he answers.

et the call

play over the loudspeaker as it

Talk to me," Rainier says.

I grunt, unable to speak for a moment. The pain of my body as it attempts to push out the three bullets I was hit with, stuttering speech for a moment.

Rainier says, suddenly alert. "What's wrong?"

He can probably hear my ragged breathing, even though I know the two humans in my car can't.

"I was just shot at, in some backwater town on the Washington Oregon border," I say as calmly as possible. "I need you to run interference with law enforcement just in case the assholes got my plates."

2/3

08:55 Fri, Nov 15

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Three

you hit? Rainier's voice is suddenly tense with worry-

"Okay. Were y

"I'll be fine." I answer him, and despite my warning her not to get up, Delilah leaps onto the seat next to me.

They hit you?!" she cries out, shoving my back away from the seat and then whimpering. "Oh my God!"

"Who is that?" Rainier questions, his voice suddenly taunting. "Is that the little redhead we've already heard so much about?"

My face flames with embarrassment and I growl. Dick Fl get him back for it. Somehow... "Yeah," I say, glancing at my beautiful Lilac for moment. "That's her."

Tears are rolling down her cheeks and she's breathing unsteadily as she watches me. Completely oblivious to my humiliation, her eyes trained on the back of my seat. Shit. It's probably covered in blood.

"Nice," Rainier goes on. "Can't wait to meet her."

"We should be there in three hours. Two if you

keeps

u put out an APB to let me slide on through," I hiss, the pain getting a little less bearabl

"TII have Garret put one out. Be safe and try not to scare the little human with your crazy driving," Rainier says and that gets Delilah s attention.

"Little human?" she repeats quizzically, before turning her attention back to me.

I snicker as I disconnect the call. "He was talking about you, I clarify, choking off the last of my words as I feel one bullet drop out of hack. Fucking crazy how little it hurts when they go in compared to when they go out. It's unreal.

We're already back on the highway and racing back toward Port Orchard, but my vision is wavering. Although there are at least fifty miles between us and the burger joist by now, try as I might, I can't ignore the pain any longer. My car begins to swerve. Tuck," I shout, pulim off the highway. Then I say, "Baby, tell me you know how to drive." Then I throw the car in park, gaze at my Lilac... and pass out.

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