

Let Them Kneel

Chapter 3 Chapter Three

Jace's hand lingered briefly on the doorframe before he stepped back. "Rest. I'll get you some water and ice. Maybe call the pack physician—just in case."

"I said I don't need a physician." Julian's growl was sharp, but Jace didn't flinch. He only inclined his head once, obedient as always, before closing the door behind him.

Silence pressed in. Julian exhaled hard, dragging a hand through his hair. Heat crawled over his skin like wildfire, his pulse hammering. He yanked off his jacket, then tore at the buttons of his shirt until it hung open. His boots hit the carpet with a heavy thud, socks following.

But the heat didn't ease. It thickened, crawling lower, curling hot and urgent between his thighs. His cock surged, hard and unyielding, pressing against the line of his slacks until he had to bite down a curse.

Julian froze. His eyes cut to the small paper bag sitting on the desk — the one holding the honey cake he'd bought without thinking.

The scent rolled across the room, sweet and spiced, clinging to him like it had the moment he stepped inside that bakery. He grabbed the bag, tearing it open, lifting the cake to his face. The aroma hit harder, sharp and intoxicating.

His cock twitched, straining painfully against his pants.

Julian swore under his breath, knuckles white around the bag. "What the hell are you doing?" He snarled at his wolf. "You want to fuck a pastry now?"

But his wolf didn't answer with words. It surged forward, hungry and unrelenting, dragging him to his feet, every nerve alive with a single demand: find the source.

The cake wasn't enough. It was only a thread — a trail. And his wolf would follow it.

The door clicked open a short while later, Jace stepping inside with a bucket of ice balanced in one hand and his phone in the other. “Alright, Julian, I’ve got—”

He stopped cold.

The suite was empty. Julian’s shirt and trousers lay in shreds across the carpet, boots kicked halfway beneath the desk. The paper bag sat torn open on the floor, honey cake smashed against the edge of the table.

Jace’s gaze snapped to the window. The curtains swayed, pulled by the evening breeze through a gaping hole. The glass was shattered, glittering across the carpet like spilled diamonds.

He crossed the room in two strides, leaning out to scan the street below. No wolf. No Alpha. Just the faintest shadow where the bushes had been crushed near the curb.

“Fuck,” Jace muttered, shoving a hand through his hair. His pulse kicked up, sharp and fast. “This is not good.”

Meanwhile, Kaelani shoved her key into the lock, her hands trembling, and pushed the door open. The moment she stepped inside, the warmth hit her like a wall. Not the cozy kind she’d built here over the years. This was suffocating, burning from the inside out.

She tore at her clothes as she stumbled down the hall — blouse, boots, jeans — leaving them in a trail behind her. Her nails dug into her own skin as though pressure alone might ease it, dragging across her arms, her stomach, her thighs. But the itch wasn’t on the surface. It was deeper, gnawing, primal.

By the time she hit the bathroom, she was naked, breath ragged, her body flushed pink with heat. She twisted the shower knob hard, water crashing down in a freezing spray. She stepped beneath it, gasping at the shock.

But it wasn’t enough.

The cold slid over her burning skin, raising goosebumps, but the fire inside her only roared hotter. It curled low in her belly, tightening, demanding, pulsing in places she had never felt so raw, so desperate. Her hands braced against the tile, forehead pressed forward as she choked back a sound that was half-whimper, half-growl.

No relief. No escape.

The water poured colder, sharper, and still it couldn't put out the fire consuming her from the inside.

Kaelani shut off the water with a sharp twist, stumbling back against the cool tile. Droplets clung to her skin, trickling down her flushed body, but the fire inside only burned hotter. She dragged in a breath, pacing barefoot across the bathroom floor, leaving wet footprints in her wake.

It was cooler outside. She'd felt it when she left the bakery. Maybe if she could just get to the open air, the heat wouldn't smother her so completely. But she couldn't step out naked.

With clumsy fingers she yanked a thin tank top over her head, the fabric plastering to her damp skin. A pair of panties followed, flimsy, offering no protection from the ache tearing through her.

She shoved the back door open and staggered into her small garden. The evening breeze swept over her, cool and sharp, and for a moment she almost wept in relief. She dropped to her knees in the grass, palms sinking into the earth, forehead tipped back to the sky.

But the burn didn't fade.

It raged on in her belly, in her skin, coiling tighter, demanding. Her thighs pressed together as if she could cage it, but the ache only worsened. A sound tore from her throat, desperate and broken.

Her hands moved without thought, sliding over her damp skin, slipping beneath the thin band of her panties. Fingers pressed against her aching core, but the relief was fleeting, hollow. The slick heat of her body only magnified how empty she felt, how sharp and relentless the need had become.

She gasped, hips rocking into her own touch, but the sensation was wrong – shallow, unsatisfying. The fire inside demanded more, clawed for something she couldn't give herself.

A whimper caught in her throat as she pressed harder, faster, chasing even a shred of release. But no matter how she moved, it only stoked the blaze raging through her. Nothing eased it. Nothing would.

Then a low, guttural growl rippled through the night.

Kaelani's head snapped up, her breath catching. From the darkest corner of her garden, two burning eyes gleamed, unblinking, predatory. The shape shifted forward, muscle and fur moving with lethal grace until the moonlight revealed him fully.

A massive black wolf.

Her heart lurched into her throat. She stumbled back onto her heels, scrambling, grass slick beneath her feet. "No," she whispered, terror clawing through the haze of heat. She tried to push herself backward, palms digging into the earth, but the beast prowled closer, steps deliberate, certain.

It lowered its head, nostrils flaring, pulling in her scent. A deep, rumbling growl vibrated from its chest as it closed the distance, circling her, sniffing along her skin. When its muzzle pressed lower, toward the heat flooding between her thighs, a choked cry escaped her lips.

Finally. The source of the scent it had been hunting.

The wolf's hunger was palpable, its intent undeniable. Kaelani's entire body shook, torn between fear and the unbearable need writhing inside her. She wanted to scream, to run, but the fire in her veins left her weak and trembling.

Kaelani braced her palms against the ground, heart pounding, and forced her body to move. She shoved herself upright, desperate to reach the back door, to get inside where she could lock this nightmare out.

But the wolf was faster.

It lunged low, pressing its muzzle between her trembling thighs. A cry tore from her throat — mortified, furious, undone — yet the molten rush that answered the touch stole the strength from her legs. Her body betrayed her, trembling with need she didn't want to feel.

"No—stop—" she gasped, but the word dissolved into a whimper as heat clawed through her again. She should have pushed it away. She should have fought. But she couldn't move. Couldn't think.

And then, before her wide eyes, fur dissolved into skin. Muscle shifted, bones snapping and reshaping, until it was no longer the massive wolf between her legs — it was him.

That Alpha from her bakery.

His mouth replaced the muzzle, his tongue tasting her with feral hunger. His hands gripped her thighs, holding her open, anchoring her as if she might vanish if he let go.

Kaelani's entire body shook, horror and heat colliding until she no longer knew which was which. She wanted to scream. She wanted to surrender. She couldn't do either.

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