

Worthless to Priceless The Alpha's Rejected Mate

#CHAPTER 41 - Read Worthless to Priceless The Alpha's Rejected Mate CHAPTER 41

CHAPTER 41

AMELIA'S P.O.V

My head was pounding. It felt like someone was running a construction site inside my skull. It took me what felt like hours but I am sure in reality was only a few minutes to get my bearings and get myself acquainted with reality again. I forced my eyes open and to my shock, the sky was a beautiful mixture of colors. It was like someone had splashed a water color palette into the sky prompting it to turn into a mixture of orange and purple and a slight pink hue around the edges.

The first thing I noticed after staring at the sky was that the room had been fixed. The dresser had been replaced and so had the windows. The room like brand new with beautiful wooden carvings replacing the things that had been broken during the fight as well as a beautiful vanity sitting on top of the dresser.

I glanced at the clock beside the bed and it read 6 p.m. I couldn't remember the time Kaden and Blake fought but I could clearly remember the day and it was not the date I was seeing on the clock. I sprung into an upright sitting position wondering if I had seen wrongly but I hadn't. According to the clock, three days had passed since the fight and since I figured out that I was mated to Kaden.

I was shocked and I tried to wrack my brain to remember anything but the last thing I remembered was falling unconscious in Kaden's arms. Was I really asleep for that long? I looked down and realized that someone had changed my clothes and I flushed pink as I thought of the possibility of Kaden changing me and seeing me naked.

I was so disoriented due to the lost time but I wasn't ready to see anyone yet. I decided to ask the one person I knew who might have the answer. It took a while to stir my wolf awake because she was also sleeping, but once she did, I could feel her presence around me.

"What happened to us? How did time fly by so quickly?" I asked.

"Shifting very late in age is dangerous and it can take a toll on the body and the mind. Your mind was so worn out and exhausted from the shifting and the news that you fell into a coma. It took a few days for you to regain your strength back."

I was shocked by her words. I couldn't imagine how worried everyone must have been when I didn't wake up after the first day. I knew I would have been if I was the one watching.

“How do you feel?” my wolf asked hesitantly and I knew she wasn’t talking about physically.

“Is Kaden really our mate?” I couldn’t help but ask her.

She sighed and I expected her to give me a simple response but instead, she answered with a question. “How do you feel about him? Do you like him? Do you think you can trust him?”

My instincts concerning him were a little fuzzy. I felt like he was trust worthy but there was something else about him that I couldn’t figure out. Everything was hazy and I wondered if it was because we were mates.

“I don’t know,” I admitted. “The problem isn’t him; the problem is that I can’t get over Blake. Seeing him here reignited feelings I thought I had buried away. I am furious at him for rejecting me but I cannot stop thinking about him.”

My wolf hesitated and I instantly knew something was wrong.

“What is it?” I asked. “Tell me what the matter is.”

“I can feel a bond with both Blake and Kaden,” she said and shock filled me. I had never heard of that happening before. “The one with Kaden is stronger but the one with Blake is there.”

Shock filled my every pore and I tried to wrack my brain as to how that was possible. It was unheard of for a wolf to be mated to more than one person much less a wolf like me who was a late bloomer.

I couldn’t believe it and the more I tried to think about it, the more I could feel a headache coming along.

I was so lost in my thoughts that I didn’t realize that someone was opening the door to my room until it creaked open. I retreated further into the bed but let out a sigh of relief when I saw Clara. She didn’t notice me at first but when she did, a smile grew on her face and she rushed over to pull me into a tight hug.

“I am so glad that you are awake,” she said as she ran her eyes over me to make sure I was fine. “Are you hurt? How do you feel? You have been out for so long.”

“I’m fine,” I assured her with a small smile. “I just feel a little disoriented from the lost days but I assure you that I am fine.”

She smiled widely and pulled me into another hug. I couldn’t help but embrace her back because there was something so familiar and welcoming about her scent. She was one

constant thing in my life right now and it was a lot easier to focus on her than to focus on the shit storm that was my mated life.

“You must be hungry,” she said as she pulled away from me. “Grandma will be so excited to see you. She has made dinner every day for you in the hopes that you would wake up hungry. I even dressed you so you would wake up in clean clothes.”

I was relieved that she was the one who had changed me and not Kaden. If it were him, I would have felt very self conscious. She helped me to my feet and I couldn’t help but smile as I allowed her lead me out of the room. It took a while for me to get used to bearing my own weight on my legs again but once I did, I followed her out.

When we got to the living room, Devin was reading his newspaper as usual and Pamela was setting the table. Pamela saw me first and she let out a small shriek before pulling me into a hug. It felt like

I was part of their family and I couldn’t stop myself from beaming from ear to ear as they watched over me and coddled me like I was one of their own.

I was led to the dining table like I was a fragile egg on the verge of breaking and Pamela doted over me like I was a pup. I had never been doted on by a mother figure and her actions brought a bittersweet ache to my chest.

“Kaden will be so excited to know that you’re awake,” Pamela said. “I will call him while I finish up dinner.”

Before I could say anything, she disappeared into the kitchen. I wasn’t sure how I felt about having Kaden around. I had not gotten enough time to come to terms with the knowledge that I wasn’t just mated to him but also to Blake and I knew for a fact that Kaden was not going to take that news well seeing as he did not hesitate to beat up Blake when he saw him kissing me. I couldn’t tell Pamela all of that so I stayed silent as she went to call Kaden.

It took exactly fifteen minutes for Kaden to arrive. I counted the seconds until I heard the knock on the door and it was Clara who opened it. His eyes immediately searched the room until they found mine and I had to look away due to the intensity in his gaze. He walked over to me and took a seat next to me.

I could feel the heat from his body and his scent filled my nose. The last time, I didn’t have time to really breathe in his scent because of how tired I was. He smelled manly and he had a woodsy scent mixed with something that smelled suspiciously of chocolate and the earth.

I could tell he wanted to speak to me but before he could say anything, Pamela returned with a large dish that was steaming from the top. She placed it in the centre of the table and called everyone to eat.

The dinner was very tense. Usually everyone would talk about their day and the table would be filled with laughter and Devin cracking jokes to make Clara snort water out of her nose but today, it was quiet. I think everyone was unsure of what to make of Kaden's presence so they all stayed quiet.

Sometime in the middle of dinner, I felt Kaden rest his arm behind my chair and I stiffened when his skin came in contact with mine because of the fireworks- I was yet to get used to that. Everyone ate very quickly and within ten minutes, we were all done. Clara decided to help her grandmother in the kitchen and Devin went back to his newspaper so it was just Kaden and I.

"Can I talk to you?" he asked softly and I nodded.

We rose from the table and I saw Devin glance at us over his paper but he didn't make a move to speak or stand. I led Kaden into my room and I didn't want to shut the door because it felt so final but I also didn't want to leave it open in case anyone wanted to eavesdrop.

I ended up shutting the door and no sooner than I had done so, Kaden pinned me against the wall and he kissed me. If I thought kissing him before was amazing, then it was a million times better this time. A part of me wanted to rejoice and melt into the kiss but my brain was a maze and a labyrinth. I couldn't get my thoughts under control and there was a lot of worry from my end.

I felt Kaden's hands trail down my body until they got to my ass and he squeezed. That action caused me to squeal and he took it as permission to slip his tongue into my mouth. Everything about the kiss was euphoric but I couldn't bring myself to enjoy it because my thoughts kept drifting to Blake. Was I cheating on him by kissing Kaden?

Kaden realized that I wasn't as into the kiss as I should have been so he pulled back. He analyzed me slowly from head to toe and I couldn't help but feel self conscious so I cast my gaze on the ground. Ever so slowly, he placed his finger underneath my chin and he tilted it up until I was staring right in his eyes.

His eyes were as captivating as ever and try as I might; I was not able to look away from them because of how they pulled me in.

"What's wrong?" he asked and I swallowed deeply when I realized that I was going to have to give him an answer.

CHAPTER 42

KADEN'S P.O.V: FLASHBACK

When Amelia fell unconscious in my arms, I panicked. I tried to shake her awake but she was not moving. I could feel her pulse and I could feel her through the bond but

everything else was quiet. It was like she was barely breathing and she was as still as log. If not for my many years at being around dead bodies, I could have mistaken her for one.

The thought of her dying was enough to send me into another panic and I began to shake her furiously trying to will her awake but nothing seemed to be working. It felt like hours when in reality it was only a few seconds. I tried CPR and but she still wouldn't stir and that was when I knew that I needed medical help.

I lay her gently on the bed and took off in the direction of the front door. I had left my phone with Caleb when I rushed out so I decided to run all the way to the hospital to get the healer. I calculated it and figured it would take me about twenty minutes to get the healer and return. I just hoped that nothing bad happened to Amelia in the meantime.

I was so consumed with my task that I didn't even pay attention to the other people in the room until Devin blocked my way. He didn't do it intentionally, but it was still enough to annoy me. He must have noticed the expression on my face because he took a step back.

"Is everything okay?" he asked and I nodded. "Where is Amelia?"

"I need to get the healer, she won't wake up."

A dark look crossed his face but he stopped me once again. "Show me."

I wanted to push him out of the way but I also knew that Devin was one of the smartest men alive. My father trusted him so much and therefore, so did I. I forced myself to calm down long enough to

take Devin to Amelia. He leaned over her and put a finger by her nose to ensure she was breathing. Once he was sure, he rose with a small smile.

"She is fine," he assured me and I turned to him with confusion. How could she have been fine when she was unconscious? "The shifting is taking a toll on her body and that's why she must have passed out. There is no need for a healer."

I still wanted to get the healer but Devin looked sure and he looked calm and I knew that he would never do anything to hurt Amelia. I forced my limbs back into the room and made sure she was comfortable in bed. I pulled the blanket up to her chin and pressed a soft kiss to her hair.

"When will she wake up?" I asked and he hesitated before speaking.

"I don't know," he admitted. "I can't tell for certain how long it will take for her to regain her strength. The moment she does, she will wake up."

I appreciated that he didn't lie to me so I thanked him. He gave me a curt nod and walked out of the room leaving me alone with Amelia. It took another five minutes before I was finally able to detach myself from her and walk out of the room.

As I left the room, Caleb arrived at the house. He looked slightly annoyed and frustrated and I could only imagine that being around Gregory for that long must have taken a toll on him. He flopped into the couch dramatically and took a sip from the tea that Clara was drinking causing her to scowl at him and smack his upper arm.

I made my presence known by clearing my throat and Caleb turned to me. In one second, he had gone from playful brother to determined Beta and he sat up straight.

"Amelia will not be a problem in regards to Gregory," he assured me. "I'm sure he has been convinced that we either do not have her or we have killed any trespassers."

"Good."

The last thing I needed was Gregory causing or stirring up any trouble in my pack. I needed to keep both my pack and my mate safe and the first step in doing that had already been achieved.

"Make sure no one knows who Amelia is," I told him and he nodded in understanding. "They must not know her family or that she came here as a rogue. Find a compelling back story and spread it."

"I will make sure that her identity remains a secret."

He was about to turn back to his sister when I realized that I needed him to find out something else for me.

"There was a boy," I began slowly. "I think he snuck in with Gregory. I know for a fact that he was from Amelia's pack. Check the footage, you should see him and I will give you a description. I need you to find out who he is and what his relationship was with Amelia."

"How did he sneak in?" Caleb asked. "Where did you see him?"

The image of the boy kissing Amelia snuck into my head and I had to clench my fists tightly to prevent from killing someone. "That doesn't matter. I want you to find everything you can on him and get it back to me."

Caleb nodded but it wasn't him who caught my attention. Clara had her eyes on me and there was something in them. I couldn't read them but it was as if she knew something but she didn't want to tell me and somehow she wanted me to know too.

I decided in that moment that I didn't have the patience to deal with anyone so I walked out of the house.

Over the next few days, I checked on Amelia three times a day. I checked on her in the morning before I went to work and I checked on her in the afternoon before I went to do my rounds in the pack then finally at night before I went back home.

Devin assured me that it was normal for her to be out for this long but it had already been two days and I could not help but feel like there was something wrong and there was something I could have been doing. I wanted desperately to call the healer to check on her but Devin told me that it would only be a waste of everyone's time so I forced myself not to.

I was in Amelia's room working using her desk when my phone rang. I knew who it was and I forced down a groan as I picked it up. I had been ignoring my mother's calls since yesterday and I wanted to ignore it again but I knew that she would probably come to the office and demand to see me. It would be uncomfortable for everyone involved so I swiped right and placed the phone at my ear.

"I have been trying to get you," she said as soon as I answered. "Don't tell me that you're too busy for your own mother."

"I have been busy, what is it mother?"

"I had something important to talk to you about and I wanted to see you at the office," she paused for dramatic effect. "I came yesterday but you weren't here and no one would tell me where you were so I figured I would call."

"I don't think I can make it to the office right now."

"That's fine," she brushed it off. "I can meet you wherever you are. You can just tell me--"

"Meet me in the office in fifteen minutes."

I didn't want to leave Amelia but I knew there was only so much I could do in terms of my mother. I packed up my documents and made my way out of the house. I could feel everyone's eyes on me

but I couldn't be bothered to offer anyone an explanation.

I drove as fast as I could and I knew I broke every single speed limit but I wanted to be done with the conversation as quickly as I could so that I could return to Amelia. Everyone seemed to notice my bad mood because they all kept out of my way and settled for bowing quietly.

I got to my office and as soon as I opened the door, I wanted to leave because it wasn't just my mother who was standing there, it was Lucy as well. They were wearing matching designer outfits. It was a simple black dress with the same silver purse and I wouldn't have been surprised if my mother actually went and handpicked the outfit for Lucy by herself.

"Is this some sort of ambush?" I asked as I made my way into the office. "I was told that you wanted to see me and not Lucy."

"Of course I'm the one who wants to see you," mother said ignoring the last part of my statement as she walked over and pulled me into a hug. "I have not seen you in so long, let me look at you. You haven't been sleeping, have you? Well, Lucy is very skilled at-"

"I don't have time for this mother," I said feeling my irritation rising so I took a step back from her. "What exactly is the problem? Why did you want to see me?"

She frowned softly and I knew she hated the fact that I was not letting her butter me up. I was well aware of her tactic to play nice and coy and then spring up a surprise on me but I was not in the mood for that. My thoughts were on Amelia and I wanted to be there when she woke up.

"If you want to go straight to business," she said with a slight frown. "I came to give you a proposal that will benefit two mutual parties. It has come to my attention that you do not have a secretary. Your Beta is swamped with his work and you are with yours."

She paused slightly and I wondered where she was going with that analogy. She took a few steps back and placed her hand on Lucy's shoulders as if she was a gift that she was handing over to me.

"Lucy here is in need of an internship for college. Of course it hasn't been announced yet but I figured that you could help each other."

I suddenly realized what she was playing at and my frustration multiplied. There was no way she could possibly think I was going to agree with this. She didn't seem to notice my annoyance because she continued.

"You need a secretary and she needs an internship. If you ask me that is a perfect match."

CHAPTER 43

KADEN'S P.O.V: THE PAST

I stared at my mother with a blank expression waiting for her to say that it was all a joke but she remained smiling as if she had just given me the opportunity of a lifetime. I glanced over at Lucy who looked up at me through her lashes in what was supposed to

be an innocent look but ended up making my skin crawl. I promptly looked away and I saw her smile fall.

I was pissed that my mother kept trying to interfere and shove Lucy down my throat. I had told her time without number that I was not interested in Lucy that way but she seemed determined to have me mate with Lucy. I wanted to tell her that I had a mate but I knew that conversation was not going to end well at all so I stayed quiet.

“What do you think?” she asked when she realized I hadn’t said anything. “Lucy is available to start whenever you want. She is a hard worker and she-”

“You don’t need to speak for her,” I cut my mother off.

She was shocked that I had spoken back to her and I saw her entire being deflate- she was upset. I ran my hands through my hair in frustration.

“You’re right,” she said with a small nod then she nudged Lucy. “Why don’t you hand him the CV that you made and he can go through it and tell you exactly why he knows you’re the perfect candidate.”

Mother added the last part while looking directly at me and I knew she wasn’t speaking to Lucy in that moment. Lucy picked up a bright pink folder that was on my desk and handed it to me. I wanted to throw it in the bin but mother was staring at me in a way that had me flipping it open.©

As soon as I opened it, I knew my mother was the one who wrote it. She had highlighted plenty times that Lucy was good with children and leading a pack as if that was something that my secretary needed to know. I resisted the urge to roll my eyes and I placed the file back in Lucy’s hands.

I knew about the internship position and I wanted to offer it to Amelia so I could have an excuse to be around her at every moment but I couldn’t tell my mother about it because she was against the idea of me being with my fated mate. I still didn’t know why she hated the idea so much but I was determined to find out and in the meantime I needed to figure out a way to fix the mess that she had just created.

This new development also meant that I couldn’t claim Amelia as my mate yet because I knew that mother was going to throw a fit.

“Thank you for the offer, I will think about it,” I said pointedly and they all knew what it was- a dismissal.

I saw my mother frown as if she couldn’t believe that I had dismissed her. I wanted to make my point clear so I walked across the room and took a seat in my chair then started browsing through some documents. I was barely skimming over the words but it had the desired effect because my mother cleared her throat.

"It seems you're very busy right now," my mother said and there was an undercurrent of hurt in her tone. "Lucy will resume work in a few days and you can discuss the rest with her."

She said it with no room for argument and I sighed. She held Lucy's hand in a tight grip and together they walked out of the office. As soon as the door closed behind them, I picked up the object closest to me which happened to be a vase and I threw it at the opposite side of the room with a roar of frustration.

THE PRESENT:

I was in the office thinking about how to fix the issue with Lucy when Pamela told me that Amelia was awake. I left everything I was doing and I rushed to the house. I couldn't believe it. I had wanted to be there when she woke up but some urgent work had pulled me out of the house and into the office.

As soon as I got there and I smelled her mouthwatering scent, I wanted nothing more than to pull her into my arms and never let go. I had to calm myself down as I walked in through the doors so as not to scare her with my eagerness. She was already seated at the table and I knew I couldn't do the things I wanted in public so I waited.

Being Alpha, patience is one of the skills that we have to learn and I used to pride myself on my extraordinary patience but that patience was nonexistent when it came to Amelia.

I wanted to pull her into my arms. I wanted to say damn everyone else in the room and kiss her senseless but I couldn't so I settled for placing my hand behind her chair. Even that felt like it wasn't enough but still, I waited. I waited until everyone had finished dinner and went off to do their own thing and then I told her I wanted to talk to her.

As soon as the door closed, I couldn't control myself again. I kissed her like a man starved and like she was an oasis in a dry desert. I held her close and I ran my hands down her body. I had missed her presence and her scent and just being around her was overwhelming. My senses were in overdrive and it felt like I was going to explode. If I had died in that moment, I would have died a happy man.

My wolf was doing a happy dance and jumping for joy and I could barely concentrate on anything around me. I wanted to mark her and make her my own. In that moment, I didn't care about my mother or any of the tantrums she could have thrown, all I wanted to do was to make Amelia mine and my wolf seemed to agree.

He reached out to hers so we could begin the marking process but he couldn't. It was like there was a wall that was preventing him from reaching out to her. It frustrated him and it was at that moment that I realized that she wasn't as into the kiss as I was. She was kissing me back but there was a stiffness to her body and a hesitation in her actions that led me to realize that maybe, she didn't want it.

I pulled back from her and forced my wolf into the recesses of my mind because he wasn't helping me by putting images of all the things we could be doing into my head. Amelia cast her head to the ground as if she was ashamed to look at me and I gently tilted her chin upwards until she was staring at me.

"What's wrong?" I asked and she swallowed deeply but didn't respond. "Did I do something wrong? You can tell me, Amelia."

She still didn't respond and she cast her eyes to the ground once more. There were a lot of emotions swirling through her irises but one of them was guilt and grief. My thoughts went back to the boy from earlier and I had to force down the growl that threatened to rise from my chest.

I took a step back from her to try and calm the murderous thoughts in my head. Did she love him? Were they together? Is that why she refuses to let me mark her, because of him? I was furious and I wanted to find the boy and kill him with my bare hands.

I glanced over at Amelia and she wrapped her hands around herself as if she wanted to hide from me. She slowly made her way over to the bed and took a seat but she still refused to glance my way. I knew I couldn't ask her about the boy because she wouldn't be honest so I decided to ask the next best person. I mind linked Caleb immediately and he responded within a few seconds.

"I was just about to mind link you," he said and he sounded out of breath as if he was running. "Pam told me that you were home so I planned to show you what I found in person."

"Tell me it is about the boy from earlier,"

"It is," he said but his voice had gone solemn as if he was worried about how I was going to react to it. "He was a wolf in Amelia's pack. His name is Blake and he was a soldier. He was dating Amelia and they were supposed to be mated the moment she found her wolf but he left her for her sister and was suddenly promoted."

I couldn't help but scoff to myself. She was still hung over a boy who left her for a flimsy position. It infuriated me that she was still thinking about him and that in turn made me want to storm onto Gregory's territory and torture him slowly not only for invading her thoughts but also for breaking her heart. The only thing that was stopping me was the fact that I knew it would be a declaration of war.

"Is that everything?" I asked and Blake hummed.

"It is for now but I will keep looking."

I ended the mind link immediately and turned to Amelia. She was still seated on the bed but now she was watching me. Her expression was carefully blank as if she was trying to analyze me and see what I knew and what I was going to do next.

I made my way over to her slowly and when I stood in front of her, I knew I towered over her and it made her uncomfortable because she shuffled in her spot. I didn't want to make her uncomfortable so I reached behind me and pulled the chair from her desk. It had been my home for the past three days although she didn't know that.

I pulled the chair forward and sat down so that I was facing her. In our position, I could feel the heat of her skin on mine even though we were not touching and I could feel the pull from her bond. If it were any other day, I would have pulled her into my lap but I had other things to handle.

"What happened earlier?" I asked but she stayed silent. "Do you not feel the bond between us? Is that what the problem is?"

"I can feel it," she began slowly and she opened her mouth to say something else but I cut her off.

"Is it because of Blake?"

When those words left my lips, her eyes widened and whatever she was about to say disappeared from her lips.

"I-" she began but she fell silent. She opened her mouth to speak but no words would come out.

I stood to my feet so quickly that she chair fell over.

"Kaden," she began and I stopped waiting for her to tell me that she wasn't thinking of him but she couldn't say any words.

I had my answer.

CHAPTER 44

AMELIA'S P.O.V

Kaden didn't stick around after that. I didn't know how he found out about Blake but I didn't want to say anything because I was worried that he would hurt him. My silence however may have done more harm than good because Kaden did not speak to me after that.

He walked out of the room even though I tried to speak to him and according to Clara; he walked out of the house without looking back. He had not been back to see me and it

had been three days. I tried to ask Caleb about him but Caleb would only give me simple answers and not offer anything else. Clara told me that Kaden had probably told him not to say anything to me.

I couldn't help but feel bad especially because my wolf would not stop reminding me that I had hurt our mate with my actions. I used to think that getting a wolf would be fun but in reality it was like having an alternate persona in your mind who never left you alone. She pestered me day and night and I actually wanted to apologize to Kaden but I was too weak to leave the house.

Despite the fact that I was awake, my body had not fully recovered and I slept most of the day away and the few hours I was awake, I used to learn how to use my newfound talents as a wolf. I had to learn how to tune out certain sounds or scents so I wouldn't be overwhelmed and I had continued with my training

I had gotten so used to it that when I got back today, I was barely even winded. I freshened up for school and put on a pair of ripped jeans and a beautiful wrap top. There was a silver of skin between the waistband of my jeans and my shirt and the weather was chilly so I picked up a warm jacket to carry along just in case.

I was finishing up with my hair when I heard a slight knock on my door and Clara walked in. She was also dressed for school but she was in a long maxi dress that flowed to her ankles and her hair hung down in ringlets around her face.

"Do you have an extra hair tie?" she asked as she rushed into the room and I quickly picked up a spare one and handed it to her.

She thanked me and tied her hair up into a messy ponytail. When she was done, she was about to leave but something made her turn her attention towards me and she stopped to stare at me for a few seconds. I couldn't help but feel self conscious and I quickly glanced at the mirror to make sure there wasn't anything wrong with my appearance. When I was sure that I was fine. I turned to her.

"Is everything okay?" I asked and she seemed to snap out of whatever stupor she was in. "You look different- a good different." she quickly added then she made her way over to me. "You look more like an adult and you look very beautiful."

I couldn't help but flush pink at her compliment. I was not used to people giving me compliments so I was not sure how to answer them. I mumbled a thank you under my breath and I saw her smile. She reached out and adjusted the wrapping of my dress.

She pulled back. "Are you ready? It's been a few days so you might have a lot to catch up on." "I'm as ready as I will ever be."

The drive to school felt unusually long. Clara wanted to drive me but I assured her that I was fine and I could take myself but the truth was that I wanted a few minutes to myself

in order to wrap my head around the things that had happened recently. In just a few days, my life felt like a soap opera and I didn't even know where to start.

I was not completely surprised that Kaden had found out who Blake was. I should have known that after their huge fight, he was going to search up on him and find out everything he could. I was shocked however that it took that short amount of time. When he asked me about Blake, I didn't know what to say.

I have been so confused about the entire thing and about both of them. I am not sure exactly how I feel when it comes to either of them. On one hand, I am very grateful to Kaden for everything he has done and I understand why he did it and I also feel some form of attraction to him, but on the other hand we have Blake the man I have loved and done everything just to be with and he rejected me. I wasn't sure what I felt and it felt too soon for me to make a decision.

I understood how Kaden may have felt hurt by my actions but the truth was that I couldn't lie to him and in that moment. I was thinking about Blake albeit not in the way he may have thought. I had always prayed for a mate but I did not know that having one would bring so much trouble and confusion. I couldn't talk to anyone about it because I didn't know how they would react to it and my wolf had been completely quiet since.

As if summoned, she stirred when I thought about her. "What do you think I should do?" I asked her. "It has been a few days and Kaden refuses to speak to me."

"I'm not going to tell you what to do," she said simply. "What I will tell you is that you have to cut off ties with one of them. You cannot have them both and this problem will keep arising unless you make a choice and stick with it."

As soon as she said that, she went back to being quiet and I let out a groan of frustration. I knew she was right but I did not know where or how to start. I was either going to have to permanently cut ties with the man I had loved my entire life or the man who had given me refuge when I had nowhere to go.

I was still thinking about it when I got to the front of school. I knew I would have to worry about it later so I shoved every thought of mates into the back of my head and got out of the car. No one paid much attention to me as I walked through the halls. Everyone was busy doing their own thing and it wasn't until I got to my first class that I felt eyes on me.

I didn't see Lucy but I saw Aiden and Serena on opposite sides of the class. I knew they both wanted me to sit with them but I remembered Serena's warning and something about Aiden seemed to rub me the wrong way today so I ignored him and sat next to Serena.

"You made the right choice," she whispered to me and before I could ask anything, the teacher walked into the class.

For the duration of the class, I could feel Aiden's eyes on me. He had an intense gaze just like Kaden but unlike his cousin, his stare did not elicit a good reaction from me. It was difficult trying to keep myself from looking towards him the entire class even though he was desperately trying to will it.

At the end of class, I wanted to rush out but somehow as I was grabbing my things. Aiden made his way over to me. Serena cast a wary glance at me but she refused to look at Aiden. I couldn't help but feel like there was something going on between them but I had no proof.

"Can I talk to you?" Aiden asked me and I knew there was no way I could get out of it. 'I'll catch up with you later, Serena," She hesitated but finally. she grabbed her bags and left. I turned to Aiden. "Hi, Aiden."

I grabbed my bag and started walking out of the classroom quickly hoping he wouldn't be able to keep up but he easily matched my strides. He walked right next to me as if he had nowhere to be and that was when I remembered that our next class was not for another hour at least.

"There's something different about you," Aiden announced out of the blue and I glanced at him. "I don't know exactly what it is but there is something It might be the way you look but I think it has more to do with your aura- it is different."

"Thank you," I said unsure of how to respond.

Earlier, Clara had said something different and I began to wonder if there was something I was unaware of. Did shifting make you appear < different? Did it change how people perceived you? I knew the best person to answer that question was Kaden but as he was not speaking to me, I decided I would ask Devin when I got home.

"If that's everything," I began slowly as I started to inch away. "I need to go to the library.

I started to leave but Aiden reached out and grabbed my upper arm. There was something unsettling about the way he held me and I quickly snatched my hand out of his grip. We had never seemed so — interested in me before and now it was like he was eager about something. I didn't know what his problem was but I knew that whatever it was, it was not good.

"Please don't grab me next time," I said softly not wanting to upset him but wanting him to get the message I was trying to pass across. "You're right. I'm sorry," he raised his hands in mock surrender. "I was just wondering if you wanted to join my- study group."

He hesitated before saying the word study and I knew that wasn't his first choice of words.

"No, I'm sorry," I started to inch away but he closed the gap between us once again.

"It's nothing serious," he tried to convince me. "It is just a few of us that meet outside of school to study. I assure you that it is nothing crazy." I wanted to get away from the conversation as soon as possible so I inched a little bit away from him once more.

"I have to report to Kaden every day," I blurted out and I saw an unfamiliar expression cross his face. "I have to go, I'm sorry."

I rushed away before he could speak and even though I left him, I could still feel the weight of his stare on me.

CHAPTER 45

KADEN'S P.O.V

It felt like years since the last time I spoke to Amelia. Every single time I spoke to Caleb, it took all my strength to stop me from asking him about her. It felt like a physical pain whenever I drove past the house without walking in. I did it more times than I would have cared to admit because even though I could not see her, I wanted to be around her.

I had hoped that maybe she would have felt bad about what happened and come to find me but she didn't and it frustrated me. It felt like I was the only one feeling the pull between our bond and she didn't even care. I was losing my mind from not being around her and every single time I had seen her, she looked happy.

I had documented her training progress by watching her sometimes through the woods. It wasn't on my usual jogging route but I had decided to start taking the longer route so that I could get a glimpse of her. She had gotten better in training which made me proud and she seemed to be getting along with Ronald. If it were anyone else, I would have been jealous but Ronald had a mate and three children. I knew he would never look at Amelia the wrong way.

Seeing Amelia daily was also meant to calm my resolve against the impending storm that was Lucy working in my office but it did nothing to help. I wanted to let her know about it but seeing as we were not on speaking terms, I was unable to. I tried to convince my mother that Lucy was not a good fit for the office but she shut down the conversation whenever I brought it up and tried to convince me that Lucy would be a good fit for me.

She started work two days ago and it has been a nightmare to say the least. She does not know anything about working in an office and she spends most of her time reapplying her makeup and talking on the phone. She barely picks up the calls in the office and one time, she walked out for half an hour because the office air was not good for her hair. I was so furious that I did not realize when I yelled at her.

Five minutes later, I got a call from my mother asking me to take things easy on her because this was her first time and she was just learning. I was furious that my mother kept pulling strings and trying to involve herself in my life and if it was someone else, they would have been sent away by now but I owed my mother a lot and I did not want to offend her so I stayed silent.

The only thing that Lucy could do well was type up documents. She was efficient and fast at that and I reluctantly had to applaud her for giving me some documents ten minutes before when I had expected them to be delivered. That was the only thing that made her stay fairly tolerable but it still wasn't enough to cover my general irritation that seemed to only appear when she was present and for some reason, she was always present.

I was so lost in my thoughts that I didn't realize someone was knocking until the door knob turned. At first, I thought it was Caleb because I was expecting him to return and give me feedback on the new guards but when I smelled the choking scent of Lucy's artificial flowery perfume, I resisted the urge to groan. Her perfume always gave me a headache because it was so strong and there was an underlying scent to it that I found disgusting. She seemed to like it because she always used much more than was necessary.

She made her way into the room with a faux innocent look on her face. "I'm sorry to walk in like that but I knocked and you didn't respond. I brought the files that you needed.

I stayed silent hoping that she would take the hint and realize that I didn't want her anywhere close to me. She walked into the room and placed the files on my table but instead of turning and walking out of the room, she walked around the table until she was standing directly beside me. I raised a brow in my direction but she pretended as if she didn't realize what she was doing and opened one of the files.

She was wearing a skin tight black skirt with a barely there white shirt that was almost completely see through. I could see the hint of her lacy bra and the first two buttons were undone so when she leaned forward, she was giving me a perfect view of her breasts. Her perfume assaulted my nose and it took everything in me for me not to sneeze because of how much it threatened to choke me.

"There was something I didn't quite understand in one of the files," she said in a soft and seductive tone. "I was hoping you could explain it for me because you wanted me to send it to the miners. I would not want to send the wrong thing. I hope this is okay?"

I couldn't tell if she was telling the truth or if she just wanted me closer but I was not going to risk the safety of my pack members so I leaned forward. The letter was pretty much self explanatory and it was instructing the miners not to go to the west mine because it was unsafe. She pointed out a few discrepancies that I could have sworn were not there when I gave it to her and I quickly advised her on what to do.

"Make sure the letter goes straight to the head of the mines." I instructed. "I want to be sure that no one goes there and gets hurt. Is that clear?"

"Yes sir." she added the last part in a seductive purr and I leaned back in my seat.

She made an entire show of dropping the files on the floor and bending over so her ass was directly in my face as she picked them up. I would have been lying if I said that Lucy didn't have a good body. She had soft curves and she was lean in all the right places but as I stared at her I couldn't help but think about Afhelia and her wide curves. Before meeting Amelia, Lucy would have been my ideal type but now, I couldn't help but compare every girl I met to Amelia and I had no idea why. It was not like she even cared to think about me any way.

She started to walk away but she tripped over the rug and fell into my lap. A part of me knew it was wrong and wanted to push her off but another part of me wanted to see where she was going with her act so I did nothing as she chuckled softly and tried to adjust herself in my lap while deliberately brushing against my dick in order to get a reaction out of me.

"I am so clumsy," she said softly as she tried to hide her face bashfully. "My mother has always told me to stop wearing heels because she fears I will twist my ankles in them. I guess she was right this time."

I looked down only to see her ankle looking a little red. It didn't look twisted but it definitely looked sprained but I knew it would be fine within a few seconds- she was a wolf and her healing would kick in anytime soon. She made no move to get up from my lap and instead, turned to face me.

She placed a hesitant hand on my collar as if baiting to see if I would push her away. My wolf screamed at me to push her off while trying to remind me of Amelia and all the reasons it was wrong but I was pissed at Amelia for ignoring me for the past few days and for her relationship with Blake so I pushed my wolf into the recesses of my mind and erected a wall between us. If Amelia was allowed to be with another man then so should I.

"You are such a perfect gentleman," Lucy said softly as she played with my collar and the hair beneath the base of my neck. "Another man would have let me fall on my ass but you didn't. I should thank you for that."

"How do you presume to do that?" I asked and she looked shocked as if she was not expecting me to respond but she quickly wiped the look of her face and replaced it with a small smile.

She trailed her hand down my chest until she got to my own hands and she wrapped one around her hips until it was daying on her full ass. When she saw that I didn't move my hand, she trailed her fingers up my arm while making sure to graze my

kin'with her nails before leaning forward and claiming my dips with hers, She tasted like berries and she tasted wrong but I allowed her to kiss me. She moaned softly as she moved her lips against mine and tangled her fingers in my hair.

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She kissed with a lot of eagerness and relief as if she had been waiting for me to do this for a very long time. She licked the seam of my lips and I knew she wanted my tongue but I couldn't bring myself to give it to her. As if sensing my hesitation, she stood up from my lap and straddled me so that her core was settled directly over my dick and I could feel just how wet she was because she was not wearing any panties.

Her wetness didn't do anything to me because I couldn't help but wish it was Amelia on top of me instead of her. Just then I thought of having Amelia wet. Every time I had my dick swelling and Lucy smiled triumphantly thinking that my _ > reaction was because of her. Once again: she wrapped her 3 in that and this time, she did move my hands, I placed them on her ass by myself and pulled her closer. I knew what I was doing was wrong but I couldn't bring myself to stop because some part of me wanted to spite Amelia so this time when she kissed me, I slipped my tongue into her mouth and kissed her back.

She sagged against me in relief and I bunched her hair into a ponytail and pulled back hard so I could angle her mouth into whatever position I wanted. My guilt was merely a whisper in the back of my mind as I allowed myself to kiss her back and I allowed myself to be so lost in the kiss that I didn't hear the knock on the door until it was too late.

I pulled away from Lucy just in time to see the door opening and revealing my actual secretary and Amelia standing directly behind her.

CHAPTER 46

AMELIA'S P.O.V

I had been dreading my meeting with Kaden in the pack house because I was unsure of how to act around him. Things had changed now and he wasn't just my Alpha anymore- he was my mate. I wondered if it would change anything or if things would stay the same and I also didn't know how I was going to be able to sit across him for an hour while feeling the mate bond surging between us.

At the end of school, Clara offered to drive me but I turned her down. It was something I needed to do by myself so I could weigh my pros and cons alone as well as prepare

myself for the inevitable surge of emotions that would surface from seeing him. Although, when I got to the pack office, I began to wish I had asked Clara to come with me because there was a gnawing feeling at the centre of my chest.

It took me almost five minutes to get out of the car because I couldn't help but feel like something bad was happening or going to happen. It was a constant ache in my chest that I tried to rub off but it refused to leave. It had stuck to me like a leech and no matter how many breathing techniques or calming effects I employed, the feeling did not leave me. By the time I had convinced myself to get out of the car, the feeling increased. It rocked me on my feet and I had to hold onto the wall to stabilize myself.

"Are you okay?" I heard a guard ask but I nodded. He didn't believe me and I stood to my feet with a wobbly smile in order to convince him I was fine.

I could tell he still wasn't convinced but he let me pass. He must have seen me around before and that was why he didn't ask any more questions or maybe he was scared that I was going to pass out and he didn't want to be the closest person to me while I passed out. I brushed past him and made my way into the large office building. It still looked and smelled the same.

I made my way up the stairs that I knew led to Kaden's office and while I passed, I saw Aiden talking to a few guards and I didn't want to bother him so I just waved to him and to my surprise, he returned the actions. It still shocked me that I had unfiltered access to the Alpha and the Beta of the pack to the point of being obligated to see the Alpha every week seeing as I was nothing but a lowly pack member.

I got to Kaden's floor and I was met with his secretary. She was typing so fast on the laptop that I could barely see her fingers touching the keys. She was so lost in her work that it wasn't until I was directly in front of her and I cleared my throat that she even noticed that I was standing there. She had her hair in a tight ponytail and her glasses hung low on her nose.

"Hello, Amelia, right?" she asked pushing back her glasses and I nodded. "Is it time for you to see the Alpha already? I thought it was tomorrow?" "He said weekly," I reminded her and she hummed.

She glanced at the door almost as if she didn't want to go in and I felt that gnawing feeling in my chest return. I was about to offer to return later when she finally stood up. She gathered some documents in her arms and gestured for me to follow her.

"If he's busy," I began but she cut me off. "He shouldn't be, the last time I checked she just went to drop off some documents so he should be alone."

I wanted to ask who 'she' was but I didn't want to seem jealous and I also knew that I had no right to pry into his life. I swallowed down my discomfort and followed behind his secretary whose name I still didn't know. She knocked on the door but there was no

reply. I knew the room was sound proof but I figured that we would still be able to hear a response from him

She knocked once more and there was no response again so she pushed it open. "I'm sorry to bother you Alpha, but you appointment- She trailed off and I peeked over her shoulder. My mouth fell open and suddenly, I was not surprised by her reaction.

Kaden sat in his chair with Lucy straddling him. Even though they had pulled back, it was obvious that they were kissing before due to how swollen their lips were. Lucy's hair was in a tangled mess on her head and I saw Kaden's hands splayed on her ass. The scent of their arousal filled the air and I couldn't help but wonder what they would have done if we had not walked in

It suddenly became clear to me why I felt so uneasy before. Somehow, my wolf had known that something wrong was happening and she had tried to warn me but nothing could have prepared me for what I had seen and my knees felt like they were about to buckle beneath me. Kaden watched me and I saw guilt flicker in his irises but it was too late for him to feel guilty. He would not have felt guilty if he had not seen me so there was no need to feign it now.

"I think I should return later," I began and I started to take a step out of the room but I heard Kaden's voice as clear as day stopping me.

"Wait," I turned to him and in one quick move, he had pushed Lucy off him. She stumbled slightly and I saw a look of frustration and annoyance cross her face and it was directed at me. "Lucy was just leaving. We have an appointment.

Lucy looked both offended and irritated. "We were-"

He held up a hand to silence her and she instantly fell silent. He stood up from the chair 'and despite how upset I was with him, I could still appreciate his physique and the way he seemed to fill up the room. He S h

arted walking towards me and my heart began to beat like I was running a marathon. I reached out to grab his arm for stability but when I turned, she had disappeared leaving me to face things myself.

Kaden made his way over to me and he reached out to me but I took a step back. I was not going to let him touch me with the same hands he used to make out with Lucy. My steps were shaky and I had to lean against the wall in order to prevent myself from collapsing due to the pain and betrayal that was coursing through me.

A dark look crossed Kaden's face and without looking away, he spoke. "Leave, Lucy, I have an appointment that requires my attention.

She looked like she wanted to protest but at the last minute; she decided against it and stormed out of the room. She made sure to clip her shoulder with mine as she passed and she did it with so much force that I would have fallen over if not for Kaden's hand reaching out to steady me.

Once I was standing straight. I quickly jerked my hand out of his grip. "Thank you, can we sit now?"

I steadied myself while trying to draw strength from my wolf because the first thing I wanted to do was break down in front of Kaden and she obliged. She chose to stay lest through everything but I wouldn't be hurt through our bond: for anything, I think she was more hurt than I was about the entire thing. I walked past Kaden while making sure that no part of my body brushed up against his by accident.

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I sat in the seat opposite his and I couldn't look at him in his chair without picturing him with Lucy sitting over him. I couldn't help but wonder who initiated it. Did he start it? Did he want to have sex with her? Was it because of something I did? Was he trying to get back at me because of Blake? I didn't know what the reasons for his actions were and it was driving me crazy.

The air between us was strained with so much tension. We sat there in an uncomfortable silence for a few seconds before Kaden broke it by clearing his throat

"Amelia-" he began and I didn't want to hear his apology. I didn't want to talk about what I had seen so I looked away from him and stared out the window.

"Training this week was very productive," I began effectively changing the course of the conversation. "I am progressing well and I have started sparring with Ronald for better practice. He thinks I should be able to move to training with the teenagers instead of the kids soon."

He had a pained expression on his face as if he knew that I was trying to get out of spending time with him and it hurt. It annoyed me because he had no reason to act hurt seeing as he was the one who committed the actions. My reaction to him was a response to what I had caught him doing and he had no reason to act guilty or hurt because of that.

"School is a bit stressful seeing as I have missed a lot but I have a friend named Serena who gave me her notes so that I can catch up. I am confident that within the next week, I should be back to the same level as my mates."

I didn't give Kaden a chance to speak. I blurted out everything there was to say about my week. I didn't even pause to take a breath and by the time I was done, I was breathing heavily because of how fast I had spoken. Throughout the entire time I spoke, Kaden did not look away from me once. He implored me to meet his gaze but I pointedly refused and kept my eyes on the table separating me from him.

I made sure to act as nonchalant as I could. I did not want him to know that I was affected by what I had seen. I did not want to give anyone that kind of power over me again. By the time I was done speaking, I waited for him to give me permission to leave. When he didn't, I finally looked up at him but made sure to keep my face devoid of all emotion.

That seemed to snap something in him because he stood to his feet. I stood to mine too unsure of what was happening and he crossed the length of the table so he was standing in front of me. My back was pinned to the table and I was staring at the door frantically looking for an escape.

"What is going on?" I asked and when I opened my mouth to ask another question, he pressed his lips to mine in a kiss.

CHAPTER 47

LUCY'S P.O.V

I went to my car with a wide smile on my face. The force of my grin threatened to split my face in two but I couldn't bring myself to care. The more I thought about what happened with Kaden and I, the wider my grin grew. When I kissed him, I didn't expect him to reciprocate. Kaden had been insistent on pushing me away and it didn't matter how hard I tried, my efforts always fell to naught, until today. His mother always told me to be patient because I would succeed and I didn't believe her- until today. I couldn't wait to tell her everything

He kissed me back and I could still feel his hardness between my thighs and the thought of it had me flushing pink. I always knew that Kaden was huge but I didn't know he was that big. It was like a dream come true but there was something wrong.

I didn't feel anything.

He had a physical reaction to me but there was no emotion. It felt like kissing a robot- a hot robot- but a robot nonetheless. It felt dragged and like he had no interest in me. It was almost like he was trying to use me to fulfill his duties.

There was more emotion on his face when Amelia walked into the room than when I was kissing him. He held Amelia to such high standards and I had no idea why. She was a runt, I was the daughter of a war general. Why would he be more concerned with her than me?

A loud horn had me snapping back to reality and I realized I was veering of my lane. Thinking of Kaden was dangerous and I knew I needed to be careful but it didn't stop him from infiltrating my thoughts.

I was furious at Amelia for interrupting. If she had just waited a few more minutes, I would have been able to get Kaden to fuck me. If I had done that, there would have been no doubt in my mind that he was mine. She always seemed to come in at the wrong time and if I had my way, I would have thrown her out of the pack a long time ago. I didn't know why Kaden was determined to keep her around

I made a mental note to find out everything I could about Amelia at whatever cost. Even if I had to break into Kaden's office or Amelia's house, I was more than determined to do it. There was something about Amelia that they were hiding and I wanted to know what it was. I was not going to let anyone stand in the way of my happy ending with Kaden, much less a poor girl like her.

I arrived at my destination and I had to check my phone twice to be sure I had gotten the right destination. Aiden had told me that he was having a study group so I was expecting a dorm room or a house not an exotic bar. I smoothed down my dress and made my way towards the front door. The guard there leered at me and it took all my self control not to take my heels off and stab his eyes for staring at me.

When I passed him, his hand brushed against my ass and I knew it wasn't an accident judging by the ugly smile he shot my way. I planned to ignore him but he brushed my ass again and that had my anger flaring. I grabbed him by the collar of his shirt and slammed him into the wall behind me. He was shocked, that much was clear as I leaned in.

"If you ever touch me like that again. I will make sure it is the last thing you do," I spat and he nodded quickly.

Most people looked at me and assumed that I was weak but I grew up with the most decorated war general as a father. I knew how to defend myself before I knew how to run. I could have this man on his back without breaking a sweat or a heel. I released his shirt and he swallowed deeply then moved a respectable distance away from me.

I smiled at him and walked into the bar. The inside was somehow worse than the outside. If Aiden had picked an upscale bar, I wouldn't have minded but this place looked like somewhere frat boys went to get high and have orgies. The walls and floors were tiled but the tiles were cracked and dirty. The air smelled like sweat, sex and alcohol and it made me gag.

The lights were soft to create an arousing atmosphere but all it did was give me a headache. The bar was packed so I knew finding Aiden would be a challenge. Still, I moved forward determined to finish what I started. I had to push off drunk boys and cheap sluts. I had not spent five minutes in the bar but I was ready to leave.

I finally saw Aiden on the top floor. It had less people than the ground floor and I assumed it was the VIP section. I saw the stairs leading up there and I started to make my way there but I was blocked by another guard. I was beginning to get fed up with the guards in this establishment.

"I need to see Aiden," I said and he ran his eyes over me. "You can tell him that Lucy is looking for him. He knows me" "No can do, miss, that's what they all say. I can't let you up without orders."

"That's why I am asking you to confirm your orders from Aiden. He is expecting me. He asked me to come here. Do you really think that I would go out of my way to come here?"

His eyes narrowed. "Being rude isn't going to get you in there. Why don't you just find somewhere that fits your tastes?"

I had to breathe through my nose to calm down. I hated not having the upper hand in situations like this. I hated knowing that in this pack, I wasn't anyone special. If I were home, I would have ordered for this man to be thrown in jail but unless Kaden started to take me seriously, there was nothing I could do about it.

"I think we got off on the wrong foot." I began softly with a smile to emphasize my apology. "I really need to get up there to meet Aiden. Can't you make an exception just for me?"

His eyes ran over my body and the corner of his lips quirked up. "I could but what do I get in return?"

You get the pleasure of not having my foot up your fucking ass, you bitch. "I'll be sure to take care of you on my way out, how does that sound?"

He stepped aside and I made sure to trail my hand over his shoulder as I walked past I made my way up and made a mental note to find another exit. EVEN if it meant jumping out of the widow, I was going to do that. There was no way I was giving that st@azebag what he wanted:

I was already frustrated so when I got to Aiden and I saw him with not one but two girls on his arms, I was furious. I crossed my arms over my chest and stood in front of him- but he didn't even notice that I was~' standing there. It was until I slammed my hand on the table in front of him that his eyes came up to mine.

"Lucy," he slurred and it was obvious that he was drunk. I could smell the alcohol on his clothes and body. It was also obvious because one of the girls currently had her hand in his pocket and was pulling out his wallet.

"Get out," I said to both girls before adding. "Leave the wallet or I will make sure you get thrown in jail." She rolled her eyes but placed his wallet back. "Put back everything you've taken."

"You are such a joy killer," she mumbled under her breath then she pulled out his watch and some wads of cash from her pocket. She placed them in my outstretched hands and walked away.

Aiden didn't seem bothered that he had almost been robbed. He picked up a glass of vodka in front of him and downed it at once then tapped the seat next to him. I eyed the chair but decided to stand. It looked dirty enough to give me a rash just by sitting down.

"Is this your study session?" I asked sarcastically and he flashed me an open mouthed smile. "I expected something more dignified from you."

"Stop acting like you shit jewels and gold. At your core you're just as wretched as the rest of us." he leaned back and crossed his arms over his chest. "Can I have my stuff now?"

I dumped them unceremoniously on his lap and I wanted to leave but my desire for answers was greater than my pride. -hKnew I had to lower my standards for him to speak to mé'so picked up Aiden's jacket that was hanging on the chair, spread it across the seat and sat down. I made sure my skin wasn't touching the bare seats.

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"We need to talk, Aiden," I said and that seemed to sober him up because he whistled loud enough to get everyone's attention. "One free round on me downstairs."

It was like a stampede was waiting to happen as all the people rushed out of the VIP section leaving us in complete silence. Aiden smirked at me and poured me a shot of vodka. I downed it and cringed from the harsh taste. I had always been a champagne girl.

"Did you invite Amelia?" I began slowly and he scoffed. "I did but she said she had something with Kaden. I stopped listening after she mentioned his name."

I was grateful that he opened the way for the conversation I wanted to have. "Have you noticed how close they are? I just think it is weird for Kaden to have such an interest in someone so unimportant."

"I was thinking the same thing but I don't give a fuck about my cousin. He always took interest in the weirdest things. I wouldn't be surprised if he is just looking to get his dick wet."

"He isn't you," I spat and Aiden raised a brow. I exhaled deeply. "I'm just saying that Kaden doesn't seem the type. He wouldn't just take interest in anyone. I had a theory but-

I trailed off because I didn't want to voice the words but I had gotten Aiden's attention because he turned to face me fully. 'I'm listening, Lucy. What do you think the reason for all of this is? Do you think she is special?"

"What if she is his mate?"

CHAPTER 48

KADEN'S P.O.V

I waited with bated breath for her to push me away. Her lips were as soft and pillowy as always and I could have gotten lost in them. I savored the taste like it was my last because I knew she would push me away. When she lifted her arms, I was prepared to feel them but to my shock, she placed them tentatively on my shoulders as if she was unsure of whether she should pull me closer or push me away.

I didn't want to give her the chance to over think. I grabbed her waist and pulled her flush against me. Her hands wrapped around my collar as a gasp left her lips and I used the opportunity to slip my tongue into her mouth. She kissed me back albeit slowly as if she were still indecisive. I poured everything I had into the kiss. I wanted her to know how I felt about her and that I was sorry for what happened with Lucy. I had never been good with my words so I showed her with the kiss.

She seemed to understand because her hand trailed up from my collar to my neck. She was still hesitant and I understood that so I let her be. I wanted so much more than that kiss but I forced myself not to act on those impulses. I wanted nothing more than to rock my hips against hers so she would feel how badly I wanted her but I didn't. When I pulled back for air, I was grateful I didn't because there were storms in her eyes.

"Kaden," she began slowly. I knew she was as affected by the kiss as I was. "That shouldn't have happened. I shouldn't have kissed you. Especially not after- I should go.

She tried to side step me but I stopped her.

'I'm sorry,' the words felt foreign on my lips. It had been a long time since I felt the need to apologize to anyone. The nature of my position did not leave space for apologies. "I should have never kissed her and I don't know why I did. You are the one I want. I don't feel anything for her."

"She was on top of you," Amelia spat then she gasped when she realized what she had done. "My apologies, Alpha, I should have never spoken to you like that."

"You have more right than anyone to speak to me that way." I grabbed her palms tightly in mine. "You are right, I was wrong but Amelia, you are my mate, not her. You are the one I want. I am trying to be patient with you but it is hard."

She bit her lower lip as she pondered over my words. It was a simple action but it had me hardening in my pants. I tilted my head back and let out a groan. I was trying to take things easy but she was not helping matters. She was leaning against my desk with me standing between her legs and biting her lips. I wanted nothing more than to flip her over and claim her as mine. Instead, I reached out and softly tugged on her bottom lip until she released it.

"Don't do that," she scrunched her brows in confusion but I offered no other explanation save for five words. "It can be very distracting."

Her cheeks heated as if she understood what I meant. "This is happening too fast. I need some time to think. One second you were kissing her and the next you were kissing me."

I closed my eyes but nodded. She was right. If I pushed her any more I knew I would lose her so I took a step back from her and discreetly adjusted my pants so my bulge would not show. She was shocked that I agreed to her request so easily and I could tell that she had a million questions

"I have one request," I spoke up and she hummed. "I want to take you out on a date." "Are you sure?" she asked and I nodded. "You want to take me on a date. Why? Where?"

"Why is because you're my mate and I can't tell you where or it won't be a surprise. Just tell me that you agree. We can scrap out our weekly reports for dates instead. What do you think?"

"I think that's a great idea."

"Shall we seal it with a kiss then?" her cheeks heated as I leaned in and kissed her softly making sure to graze my teeth over her bottom lip as I pulled back. "Have a good day, Amelia."

She rushed out of my office quickly after that. As soon as the door shut behind her, I ran my hands down my face in frustration. I could have grossly messed things up with Amelia because of one stupid mistake with Lucy. I needed to keep Lucy in check and get her out of the way without raising suspicion with my mother. Amelia would never truly be mine as long as Lucy was in the way.

There was a knock on my door and I was prepared to tell the person to fuck off when Caleb walked in. His nostrils flared and confusion took over his features. The room

smelled like Amelia and Lucy and I could tell he had plenty questions but I had no intentions of answering them.

"Do I want to know?" Caleb asked but I stayed silent. "Fine then, I just wanted to let you know that Amelia just left. Clara will let me know when she gets home."

"What do you want, Caleb?"

"I want to know if you know what you're doing. Lucy might get suspicious and if she does then so will your mother. I'm just trying to look out for you and Amelia."

"I can handle myself and I can handle my mother. Thank you for your concern but it is not necessary right. Focus on not letting things slip to my mother."

He discreetly rolled his eyes then bowed and walked out of the office.

I stayed in the office for as long as I could. I tried to avoid going home because I didn't want to see Lucy but I knew at some point I would have to stop avoiding my home because of her. I left the office around ten p.m. hoping that she would be asleep when I walked in through the door but she wasn't.

Instead, she was seated on the couch with my mother. She was dressed in a skimpy black nightgown and I resisted the urge to groan in annoyance. She smiled widely at me but I ignored her and turned to my mother. I could see the hurt on her face but I couldn't bring myself to care.

"How nice of you to join us, Kaden," mother said as she rose to her feet. "I had to come and keep Lucy company because she was lonely. Haven't I taught you that it is rude to keep a lady waiting?"

"I didn't ask her to wait."

My mother flushed pink at my words and she quickly ushered Lucy away. I tried to step her to retreat into the comfort of my room but she stepped in with a hand on my upper arm. I didn't want to disrespect her by walking away so I tied to her and made sure I kept a most unbothered expression I could muster.

"That was utterly disrespectful, Kaden," she chided. "Lucy has done nothing but be kind to you and from what I heard, you were taking an interest in her today. I thought things were finally going to work out between both of you."

"Do you not find it weird that you are discussing your son's sex life with a stranger? Why can't you just stay out of my business and let me handle myself?"

"I am just looking out for you Kaden," she reached up to stroke my hair. "I want what is best for you and Lucy is what is best. You just need to give her a chance."

She smiled at me and gave my shoulder one last pat before walking out. When the door clicked shut, Lucy came out of her hiding place. She had the audacity to pretend to be innocent as she cast her gaze to the ground

"I ordered in dinner for us," she began in a faux innocent voice. "I was thinking that maybe we could eat together and watch a movie. There is this-"

"I am only going to say this once," I cut her off. "Stay the hell out of my personal business. What happened between us today was a mistake and I would appreciate it if you didn't go telling my mother everything that happened."

"I didn't tell her. I don't know how she found out" "Save your lies for someone who believes it."

She bowed her head even lower. "I don't know why you have such a bad idea of me. I have only tried to be kind towards you. I thought we had a real connection

She reached out for the collar of my shirt but I slapped her hands away. She looked hurt and there was, something else hidden beneath her carefree mask, it looked more like annoyance. Before I had the chance to analyze it, her mask slipped back into place and she squared her shoulders and stood up straighter.

"I know you don't like me," she began and I opened my mouth to speak but she continued. "The reason for that is because you do not know me yet. All I am asking for is a chance to get to know each other. We could have dinner together and maybe we can continue from where we stopped earlier today."

I knew what it was about immediately and I scoffed. Before I met Amelia I would have taken her up on her offer I always liked NN women, who were bold with their desires but something about Lucy put me off. Somehow, I had developed a liking for shy women who couldn't meet my eyes. I had developed a liking for Amelia and merely being around Lucy had my wolf protesting in my head.

Lucy reached out for me once more and this time, I grabbed her arm in a harsh grip. "You are going to stay the fuck away from me. The only reason you are still in this house is because of my mother. If you dare cross a line again, I will throw you out on your ass. Is that clear?"

She gritted her teeth as she responded. "Crystal clear."

I let her go and ran my hands through my hair. I had barely spent five minutes in my own house but I needed to get out. I could not bear five more seconds in her presence. I turned on my heels and made my way towards the door.

"Where are you going?" she yelled out as she followed me but I ignored her and made my way into the car. "Kaden, you can't just leave. I don't even know where you're going."

"I'm going anywhere you aren't present."

I drove off before she could mutter another word. I needed to see Amelia to calm down. My only hope was that she was asleep.

CHAPTER 49

AMELIA'S P.O.V

Clara was waiting for me in the living room when I arrived. She didn't say a thing but she was perceptive as ever and she watched me with raised brows. I knew without a doubt that she had some suspicions about what happened. I trusted her and I needed her advice so without saying a word, I grabbed her by the arm and pulled her into my room.

She allowed me drag her and once we were in the privacy of my room, I locked the door behind us. I gestured for her to take a seat next to me on the bed and she did without hesitation. It took me a minute to find my words and within that minute, she did not speak or push me. She waited quietly for me to gather my bearings and it only endeared her to me further.

'I kissed Kaden," I said finally and she just raised her brows in amusement. "He was kissing Lucy when I walked in then he was kissing me. I don't know what's happening. I don't understand what is going on. Everything is too fast. He's my mate and I feel the attraction towards him but-

"Slow down." she placed a comforting hand on my shoulder and I took a deep breath. "The semantics will give you a headache. I would ask how Lucy got into the picture but I am not sure I want to know. The real question here is do you want him?"

I didn't need to think before I nodded. Wanting Kaden was not the question, the question was whether or not I could have him. There were so many things in the way of our happiness- Blake, Lucy and my father.

"If you want him then have him. You don't have to rush things and Kaden isn't going to rush things if you tell him you want to take things slow. You have all the time in the world. Just take a deep breath and see where things go. Do you know how he feels about all of this?"

I shook my head slowly. "I think he wants me too but there's Lucy." "Forget about Lucy. This is about you and Kaden. If you are certain that this is what you want then Lucy will be handled in due time." "I don't trust her."

"I don't trust her either. Just focus on yourself and your relationship and everything else will fall into place." I nodded and she gave my shoulders an affectionate squeeze. "I should go, there's lunch for you on the table."

She disappeared from my room but I didn't have lunch. I traced my fingers over my lips as I relived the kiss I had with Kaden. There was something about Kaden that continuously pulled me in. I didn't know if it was the mate bond or something stronger. I flushed pink whenever I thought about him and how he felt against me. I couldn't step my lips from curving up into a smile.

I wanted Kaden and he wanted me. I was going to do what Clara said and focus on that. I couldn't wait for our date. He hadn't given me a day but I knew he would soon. I wondered what he had planned and I couldn't wait to see it.

I fell asleep without having any meals. The next time I woke up, it was around two a.m. and my stomach was grumbling in hunger. I would have slept through till morning but a noise woke me up. Breeze was blowing in through my window and I scrunched my brows in confusion because I remembered it being closed when I fell asleep.

I immediately shut it but not before looking out to be sure that no one was spying on me. Once I was sure that I was safe, I grabbed a robe and made my way into the kitchen in the hopes that I would find a snack. I opened the microwave but came up empty. I moved to open the fridge when I felt a presence behind me.

I turned to see Caleb standing behind me and I had to slap my hand over my mouth to prevent from screaming as I jumped in fright. He had a sheepish look on his face as if he didn't plan to scare me.

"Are you okay?" he asked and I nodded. I didn't trust myself to speak yet. "I'm sorry, I heard footsteps and I came to investigate. I got home not too long ago and I was worried that someone had followed me. Are you sure that you're alright."

"Yes," I assured him as soon as my heart was not beating a mile a minute. "I was just hungry and I came to get a snack. I am so sorry that I bothered you."

He waved me off. "Rubbish, there's some lasagna in the fridge. If you want something less heavy, you could go for some cake slices. I had one a few minutes ago and it was amazing. Don't tell Pamela I said so, but she is the best baker I know."

I couldn't stop myself from laughing. "Thank you, I will be sure to have one."

I opened the fridge and sure enough the cake slices were there. I took out two and poured myself a glass of orange juice. It wasn't until I was closing the fridge that I realized that Caleb had not left. He was staring at me intently and I had to cross check to be sure I was not indecently dressed.

"Is everything okay?" I asked him and he seemed to snap out of his reverie.

"I'm sorry for staring, I just. I just needed to see," I was more confused than ever and he seemed to notice that because he explained. "I needed to see what Kaden saw. I have never seen him ready to damn it all to hell for someone before. Don't take this the wrong way but he has not been the same since you stepped into this pack."

"I'm sorry."

"No, it's a good thing. He is less of an asshole now that you're here," he winked and I chuckled. "I think you're good for him and I may not be sure but I think he is good for you too. Just be careful, I don't think everyone will be so supportive of the both of you being together."

He spoke like there was someone in particular he was worried about but before I could ask any questions, he tipped his head in a respectful nod and walked out of the kitchen leaving me standing there alone. The air felt colder and I felt more alone than I had in a very long time.

I couldn't fall asleep again after that. I sat cross legged on my bed and stared at the wall until the clock hit five then I stood up and got dressed for training.

Pamela and Clara were awake and I made sure to compliment Pamela on the cake slices. She beamed at me like I had made her day and I almost told her that Caleb complimented her too. I would have told her if not that he chose to walk out of his room at that exact time.

I drove to the training ground excited to be there. Training had a way of taking my mind off things and helping me focus. I was also excited to have an area of my life that was not dominated by Kaden's presence. Sometimes I needed to be away to think and that was what training brought to me.

I was shocked however when I got there and I saw Kaden talking to Ronald. They were so deep in conversation that they didn't even notice I had arrived until I cleared my throat. Ronald beamed at me and pulled me into a warm hug but my eyes never left Kaden's.

"What are you doing here?" I couldn't stop the words from leaving my mouth and Ronald gasped. "That is the Alpha," he whispered.

"It is fine Ronald," Kaden held up a hand and practically shooed Ronald away. Once it was just the both of us, he closed the gap between us. "I came to see how your training was going."

“Do you always do this or is this because of me? I don’t want any special treatment.” “I will not interfere with your training at all. I do this occasionally. I haven’t done it in a while and I figured today was a good day to check it out.”

A part of me knew he was lying and was annoyed but another part of me found it endearing that he wanted to check on me so I decided to play along. I nodded and he stared at my lips as if he wanted to kiss me. I wouldn’t have stopped him if he tried but he stepped back and cleared his throat.

“Ronald is waiting for you, the others are arriving.”

This time I was the one who flushed pink because I didn’t notice the others were there.

By the end of training, my bones were sore and I was tired. I was so distracted by Kaden’s presence that

I had my ass handed to me by Ronald. {Could feel Kaden’s = apprehension each time I was thrown to the ground or disarmed but he never interfered. I was grateful for that because there was no way I would learn without being

hurt.

“You seemed a little distracted today,” Ronald told me at the end of class. “If you’re sick then you can take the next few days off.”

“I’m fine,” I assured him. “I just had my head in the clouds. I will get you back tomorrow though.”

He laughed and ruffled my hair softly before going to pack up. I would have helped him but I had an early class and I didn’t want to be late. I got into my car and I was about to start it when Kaden knocked on my window. I jumped at first because I wasn’t expecting him but when I noticed he was the one, I quickly unlocked the passenger seat for him.

He got in and shut the door behind him. Before I could even ask what he wanted, he cupped the back of my head and pulled me in for a deep kiss. He didn’t pull away until my brain was fried and I was gasping for breath.

“I wanted to do that all morning,” he murmured and kissed me again. I flushed pink when he pulled away. “Why did you really come here this morning?”

“For you,” the words left his lips easily. “I wanted to see how your training was going. Ronald told me that you were ready to progress to training with the teenagers.”

“What do you think?”

"I think he has a point," I beamed wide. I was glad that my hard work was paying off. "There is one more thing." My blood ran cold. "Did I do something wrong? What is it?"

"Friday by six," my brows scrunched in confusion at his words. "That is the time for our date. I will pick you up."

Without another word, he walked out of my car leaving me sitting there in silence.

CHAPTER 50

AMELIA'S P.O.V

I was anticipating Friday but when it came, I got so nervous that I feared I would throw up. I had been on a few dates before with Blake but something about Kaden made this feel different. Maybe it was because he was my mate or because he was Alpha. maybe it was both but I was freaking out.

Kaden did not appear at training and when I asked about him, Caleb simply said he was handling some pack work. He offered to give me Kaden's number but I promptly refused. He was the Alpha, there was no reason why someone like me should have his number. Caleb insisted that Kaden wouldn't mind but I was not willing to take that risk.

I had classes to take my mind off things but I didn't want to go. I had successfully avoided Aiden the rest of the week but I knew that he was only biding his time. I rushed out of class before anyone else and if I saw him coming down the hallway, I turned the other way. There was only so much I could do before he caught up to me and I knew it. Serena tried her best to help me but I knew she wouldn't always be around.

After my first class, I tried to escape just like I had done but I felt someone shove me hard. I fell to the ground and the contents of my bag spilled out in front of me. People snickered as I retrieved my pens off the floor. I looked around but I couldn't see any indicator of the person that had shoved me

"Do you need help?" I looked up to see Aiden standing in front of me. He bent down and retrieved the last of my pens then handed it over to me. "I had no idea you were so clumsy.

"Thank you but I wasn't clumsy, someone pushed me," I took a step back to create as much distance as I could between us. "Why would someone want to push you?" he asked and I shrugged. "Thanks again but I have to go, I have another class.

I tried to leave but he reached out and grabbed my arm keeping me in place. His grip was not bruising but it was firm and I knew I wasn't going to get out of it. He smiled at me as if he was unaware of how he was holding me in place.

"Have you been avoiding me?" he asked and I shook my head. "Are you sure because I could have sworn that you were running away from me? Is this about the study group? I'm not upset, I can understand how demanding it can be to have to bow to the whims of Kaden."

"This isn't about that, can you let go of me?"

He glanced at my arm that he was holding and for a split second, I thought he was going to refuse but he snatched his hand back. I rubbed my arm trying to get rid of the sting. I expected an apology from Aiden but he did not offer one.

"I have another study group session today. We usually hold them every Friday. This one will be happening at my house."

"I don't think I can make it Aiden," he opened his mouth to give a response but I cut him off. "I really have to go, Serena is waiting for me." "I thought you said you had a class."

I flushed pink once I realized he had called me out on my lie. "I have to meet Serena so we can go to our class. I'll see you around Aiden."

I turned on my heels and rushed into the throng of people before he could utter another word. Despite being in a sea of people I could not help but feel that his eyes were fixated directly on me. The eerie feeling of his stare did not leave me the entire time.

I was better at avoiding Aiden for the rest of the day. Although we had the same classes, I made sure to stick close to Serena. She was more than happy to help me stay away from him and judging by the death stares they sent to each other, I couldn't help but wonder if there was more to the story than I knew. I wanted to ask but whenever I breached the question, she was quick to shut it down.

By the end of the day, she grabbed her bags and practically high tailed it out so I wouldn't ask any other questions. I was forced to navigate the halls by myself and thankfully. Aiden was pulled into a conversation with a strange boy so I was able to avoid him. Classes ended by two so I had exactly four hours to get home and get ready.

I didn't know where Kaden was taking me but I was eager to find out. As soon as I got into the house, Clara was waiting for me. She practically dragged me into my room and into the tub of hot water that was waiting for me.

"Take a long bath, I'll get the makeup things," she seemed more excited for the date than I was. She had practically been floating in the air when I told her.

The bath smelled like roses and when I got in, I almost moaned as the hot water hit my skin. I stayed in longer than I needed to and if not for Clara banging on the bathroom door to tell me that we were running off schedule, I would have stayed longer.

I came out wrapped in a robe and she showed me a few outfit choices. She had a much better fashion sense than I did so I asked her to help me pick what to wear. Judging by what she chose, I knew I had made the right choice.

I settled for ripped jeans, a white corset top that accentuated my breasts and made them look fuller than they were and sneakers. I tried to find out from Clara where he was taking me but she was being tight lipped about the entire thing.

For my makeup, she settled for a natural look with glossy lips and nude shadow. When she was done, she curled her hair into a pretty ponytail and left a few strands down to frame my face. I couldn't believe that I was staring at myself in the mirror. I looked beautiful, I looked perfect. I couldn't stop myself from smiling and pulling her into a wide hug.

"Kaden will not be able to take his eyes off you," she whispered and my cheeks heated. "Just remember to have fun. This night is all about the both of you."

Just as she finished speaking, the

doorbell rang—I knew immediately

that it was Kaden. A bundle of

nerves shook inside me and my >

palms began to sweat. What if he

changed his mind? What if he oY

decided that he didn't want me to be

his mate? My mind was conjuring up

all the worst case scenarios and I didn't even realize I had forgotten to breathe until Clara's hands rested on my shoulders.

"Breathe, Amelia," she instructed me and I inhaled deeply. "Everything is going to be fine. You are worried over nothing. "What if," I began but she cut me off.

"Forget about the what ifs and just enjoy. If you ever feel like it is too much then shout down the mind link and I will come to get you with no questions asked."

"Thank you, Clara."

She smiled at me then opened the door for me to walk out. Kaden was standing there talking with Pamela and Devin. He was wearing a pair of jeans and a black shirt. He paired it with grey sneakers that were identical to mine.

When he saw me, his eyes widened and he swallowed down a knot in his throat. I noticed a bouquet of flowers in his hands and he handed it over to me. They smelled fresh and I knew they were handpicked.

"I'll put that in water for you," Pamela said as she gently took the bouquet from me. "Have fun, don't come back too late."

Kaden held out a hand to me and I gingerly took it. Sparks danced across my skin from where he held me and I felt my cheeks heat. Kaden led me over to his car and opened the door for me. His entire demeanor was soft and careful as he helped me into the car. He drove in silence and every few seconds, he would glance at me through the corner of his eyes.

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"You look breathtaking," he breathed after a second of silence. "I've been tongue tied since the moment I saw you."

"You don't look too bad yourself," I managed out and I saw the corner of his lips quirk up. "Are you going to tell me where we are going?"

"Not quite, I want it to be a surprise," I pouted and he laughed. "You look adorable when you do that. We will be there in a few minutes, Amelia, be patient."

It took us ten minutes to get there. I was confused when the car stopped because we were in the middle of the forest. Kaden helped me out of the car and I realized we were in what I could have described to be the densest part of the forest. I could barely see in front of me save for the path where Kaden was driving on.

"Are we in the right place?" I asked and he hummed

I chose to believe him and follow as he led me through the forest. I began to wonder if maybe I was a little over dressed until we got to a clearing. If someone had told me that somewhere like this existed within the forest, I would have called them a liar.

Right in the middle of the trees sat a large expanse of land. There was green as far as the eye could see with a small lake by the side. In front of the lake sat a large picnic blanket with two baskets on them. There were also two lawn chairs next to the blankets. My mouth fell open and I turned to Kaden only to see him glancing at me nervously.

"Do you like it?" he asked and I nodded. 'I love it.

I threw my hands around his neck. When I realized what I had done, I pulled back with a soft flush on my cheeks but Kaden refused to let me go. He had his arms around my waist as he pulled me in for a soft kiss. I kissed him back immediately, wrapping my arms around his neck

I could tell that he was holding himself back in the kiss. He was taking it slow just like I had asked and something blossomed in my chest. All my life. Kaden was the first person to actually take my thoughts and opinions into consideration. It warmed my heart.

I pulled back for air and he rested his forehead against mine. We stayed like that in complete silence for a full minute before he finally pulled back.

“Would you like to sit down?”