

# Two Years Gone Novel

## Chapter 31

**ZANE**

I stared at her wide-eyed, my whole body filling with fire. I could feel my wolf howling and jumping in my head. A shock burst through me, and I could feel the small pull I had toward her grow.

Had she really just said that? Did she really just give me another chance?

After a moment, my mind came back to the present. Her eyes were filled with worry. I knew she was nervous about giving me the power to hurt her again.

The smile that spread across my face was huge and happy. I pulled her close to me and brushed my lips against hers.

“My mate,” I whispered before kissing her again.

It was gentle and soft and slow. My feelings for her poured out in every touch. I pulled away, brushed stray hairs from her face, and met her eyes.

“I promise this time will be different. I’m never going to let you go again. Before, my pride didn’t let me see how strong and beautiful and kind you are. I’m not going to mess this up.”

Ella beamed up at me, and I could see how she felt without even speaking.

When we finally decided to let ourselves leave the bed and wander downstairs for dinner, I could feel the mate pull getting stronger. All I wanted to do was go back upstairs.

We made our way to the kitchen, and I met eyes with Sophie, the bright look on our faces informing her of good things.

Ella and I sat down at the island, hands locked together, and Sophie smiled at us.

“Have a nice day off?” she teased.

We both chuckled. She had no idea how nice.

“It’s been a good day,” I replied.

“We’re going to have to adjust your new schedule, though.”

“Oh? Why is that?” Sophie looked up in confusion.

“My luna will be a little too busy to be helping in the kitchen.” I smiled and turned to Ella, who smiled back at me.

Our faces snapped back to Sophie in surprise when we heard her scream in excitement. She ran around the counter and pulled us both in for a tight embrace.

“Finally!”

Ella laughed.

“What do you mean, finally?”

“You two were driving me crazy. I knew you were meant for each other, but you are both so stubborn.”

We laughed and after dinner decided to go meet with Alpha Daniel. I could see she was a little nervous, and I squeezed her hand before walking into his office.

“Dad?”

“Mhm?” my father replied from the couch in his office.

“Have a minute?”

“Yep.” He set the files down and sat up, motioning for us to enter. A small smile crossed his face when he saw our intertwined hands.

“Well...” I rubbed the back of my head, suddenly nervous.

“I want you to meet my mate.”

My father smiled brightly and stood to hug me.

“I knew you’d realize how amazing your mate is.”

Ella laughed.

“Took him long enough.”

Great. Now I had two people to give me a hard time. I rolled my eyes and laughed.

“Yeah, yeah, I know. I was an idiot.”

They both shot knowing looks at me in unspoken agreement. Alpha Daniel smiled before walking over to his desk.

“The next full moon is in a week. Do you think that’s enough time to pull together a luna ceremony, or should we wait until next month?”

I turned to Ella, who shrugged at me.

“I already wasted too much time. We’ll do it next week.”

My father clapped his hands together.

“Alright then! We’ve got a lot to do. I expect both of you in my office first thing after breakfast tomorrow morning.”

We both agreed and said our goodnights before heading upstairs. I was happy and excited until Ella let go of my hand and walked into her room.

I followed her in.

“Where do you think you’re going?”

Ella turned to me with a confused look.

“Well, I was going to change and then probably go to bed?”

“And you’re doing all that in my room, right?” I gave her a sly smile.

Ella laughed out loud.

“Zane, I’m not sleeping with you tonight.”

I walked over to her and wrapped my arms around her waist, giving her my best puppy dog look.

“Why not?”

She pushed me off.

“Just because we’re mates doesn’t mean I’m moving in just yet.”

“I’m pretty sure that’s exactly what that means!” I replied. With one swift movement, I picked her up bridal style and carried her to my room.

“Zane! Put me down!” she squealed.

I dropped her on the bed and moved close to her.

“Ella, as your alpha I require that you sleep in this bed.”

I could see she didn’t like that statement.

“Zane Davis, if you think that—”

I crushed my lips to hers, the passion I’d been holding in all evening igniting.

Ella kissed me back, meeting my passion with hers, and we spent a long time holding each other close, entangling ourselves in each other.

When we finally came up for air, Ella smiled at me before climbing off the bed and walking to the door.

“I was serious, Ella Matthews. You better get your butt back in this bed.”

Ella turned to me, a smirk on her face.

“We’ll talk about it tomorrow.”

She walked out of the room and left me breathless at the sight of her hips swaying as she walked away.

I ran my hand through my hair. This girl was trying to kill me.

## Chapter 32

### **ELLA**

I woke in the morning at my usual time, dragging myself downstairs to work on breakfast. Even though I didn’t really need to work anymore, I wasn’t going to stop until after the luna ceremony.

I started making some quiches and was almost done when my mom walked in.

“Good morning!” she sang. Somehow even after getting up at five every morning for twenty-something years, she was always chipper in the morning.

“Hey, Mom,” I replied as I took a sip of coffee, hoping to ward off the last bit of sleep in my eyes.

Sophie started working alongside me as the other assistant cooks came in.

“So how was the talk with Alpha Daniel?”

I shrugged.

“Good, he reacted about the same way you did.”

Sophie laughed.

“I think he was pretty upset that Zane had rejected you.”

“I think so too. He talked with me a while ago and said as much. He was really disappointed in Zane. I guess he’s a big believer in mates.”

“We all are.” My mother smiled, her eyes distant, and I could tell she was thinking about Dad.

“I miss Dad too.” I smiled, squeezing my mom’s hand.

As breakfast began and pack members started to wander in, I started serving plates.

Zane walked in and gave me a peck on the cheek before taking a plate and sitting down and I smiled, looking down as I tried to hide the blush forming on my cheeks.

“Good morning, everyone!” Alpha Daniel boomed as he walked in.

“Good morning, Alpha!” the pack echoed.

“We have an announcement,” he said, motioning to Zane to join him.

“Zane and Ella have decided to accept each other as mates, and we will be having a luna ceremony next week on the full moon!”

I blushed as everyone clapped and whooped. Zane walked over and took my hand.

“I hope they’re okay with this,” I mumbled.

“Why wouldn’t they be?” Zane asked, wrapping an arm around my shoulders.

“I’m just an omega, they probably don’t want me as their luna.”

Zane shrugged and then faced me, taking my face in his hands.

“But I want you, so they’ll have to deal with it.” He gave me a soft kiss and I blushed again at the whistles from the dining hall.

We didn’t see the scowl spread across Mariah’s face.

We met with Alpha Daniel to go over plans for the ceremony, and then I left them to pack business. I needed a moment to myself anyway.

I really cared about him and loved the new person he was becoming. He had gone from cruel and dark to kind.

I knew he would become a great alpha. But I needed to come to terms with the fact I would be luna. I decided to take a run to get my mind straight.

As I made my way to the edge of the forest, I started to strip out of my clothes. I hid them next to a tree and then shifted.

It had been a long time since I shifted, and my wolf was excited to have some time out to run. I sprinted through the forest, jumping over rocks and fallen trees.

It felt good. I knew exactly where I was going to go. I turned to the east and was excited as I saw the tree line begin to thin.

I kept sprinting, running down the dock, and jumping into the cool water. My wolf paddled along, enjoying the lake and the alone time.

I made my way back to shore and lay down on the rocky sand, looking out at the calm water. I had almost fallen asleep when I heard a twig snap behind me near the treeline.

My ears perked up and I looked at the trees behind me, trying to see what had made the sound.

I turned back around to the lake.

"Stupid rabbits...", I mumbled to myself. I looked back at the lake and took a deep breath.

Snap!

My head shot up again.

"I don't think you realize the mistake you've made."

I turned around to see Mariah standing there. I growled, which only made Mariah smirk.

"You see, Ella, you really should have just kept your head down and let him get over that stupid crush."

She stepped forward, glaring at me with fire in her eyes.

"I am meant to be luna. I am meant to be his mate. You should have left it alone!"

I stepped backward. I didn't know what Mariah was capable of.

"Now you're in the way! You should have just accepted your place, you little omega! You. Are. Nothing!" In her anger Mariah shifted, her wolf moving forward aggressively.

My eyes were wide, fear creeping into my mind. I was just a cook who had never been trained to fight. Suddenly, Mariah lunged forward. She bit at my neck, which made me yelp in pain.

I managed to get free only to have Mariah stalk forward again. I managed to nip at her leg, hoping to make a mark big enough to slow her down. But it didn't.

Mariah jumped on me, her jaws clamping down on my neck, her claws ripping at my ribcage. The pain burned through my body as I tried to get free.

I could feel my body getting weaker, my eyes blurring from the loss of blood. I let out a yelp before collapsing.

Mariah watched me, smirking as she saw me giving up the fight. She shifted back and stood above me.

"See. You can't even handle a small fight like this. You are weak. You are no luna."

Then Mariah walked away, leaving me fighting to stay conscious on the banks of the lake.

I could smell the blood streaming out of my body and feel the sting of the holes in my flesh.

We are not about to die here! I yelled in my head. I knew I couldn't shift, or I'd die right there by the lake.

My wolf and I gathered all of our strength and attempted to stand. We made it up and took a few steps before falling again.

Again..., I whimpered as I stood and limped forward, making it to the tree line before falling again.

Again! I yelled in my head. I stood up and limped farther, my body bleeding as I made my way back through the forest.

I made it far enough to not see the lake anymore before I collapsed on the ground, all of my energy expelled.

I lay there in the middle of the forest, my body torn and my mind blurry. I could feel consciousness leaving me, and my mind drifted back to Mariah's words.

...you are weak... you should have left him alone... you are no luna...

...little omega...

## Chapter 33

### **ZANE**

I came out of the meetings with my father and made my way to the kitchen. I hadn't seen Ella all day, and my wolf was antsy.

It was almost dinner time, and I knew I'd find her in there working, which I thought was ridiculous.

Once we had announced we were mates, I thought she should stop working, but she insisted on continuing until after the luna ceremony.

When I entered the kitchen, she wasn't there. I looked around the common area curiously.

"Hey Sophie, where's Ella?"

"Well, she went on a run, but that was hours ago. I thought she was with you. Maybe she was tired and headed upstairs?" Sophie replied, looking around curiously.

I gave a harrumph before making my way upstairs.

"Ella?" I called out as I entered her room.

Nothing. I scowled at the empty room before making my way to my own bedroom. Maybe she was waiting for me there.

My frustration grew as, once again, I entered an empty room.

I ran back downstairs to my father's office.

"Hey, dad, is..." I trailed off when I saw she wasn't with him.

"What's up?" My dad looked up at me.

"I can't seem to find Ella," I answered. I was starting to get worried and could feel my wolf pacing.

My father stood and slapped my shoulder.

"Maybe she's out back. Have you looked there?"

“No, I’ll check there next.” I looked outside and around the entire packhouse. I finally sat down at a table in the dining hall, trying to not let my panic set in.

I perked up as I saw Declan walk past.

“Declan, have you seen Ella?”

Declan gave me a sideways glance.

“No, can you not find her?”

I shook my head, and Declan shrugged.

“She might have gone to some remote corner with a book, she tends to do that. I wouldn’t worry.”

I frowned before sitting back down, worry still clouding my mind.

“Did you find her?”

I snapped my head up to see my father walking over to me.

“No. I’m starting to get worried. Sophie said something about Ella going for a run, but that was this morning. She should have been back hours ago.”

I ran my hand through my hair. My wolf was in full panic mode, and I was trying not to go there.

“Give it until dinner starts. If she isn’t back by dinner, we’ll go look for her,” my dad offered.

“Okay...” I wasn’t really listening. I was trying to think of where she might be.

Fifteen minutes later, pack members started trickling in. I watched earnestly for Ella, but still nothing.

“Dad, she’s not here.” I walked up to my father, no longer able to hide the panic in my eyes.

My father’s face went stern.

“Okay. Let’s go find her.”

He called for all of the pack trackers, and they gathered outside of the packhouse. My father stood tall, projecting authority to those he spoke to.

“Thank you for coming quickly. Ella Matthews, mate to Alpha Zane and our future luna, has been missing since this morning.

“I want squads searching the entire pack grounds and surrounding areas. Zane and I will take a squad east. I want everyone else to break up and go in the other directions. We want her found.”

They all went their different ways, shifting into their wolves and running off. My father and I shifted as well, and we charged off to the east toward the forest.

We scoured the forest, my anxiety becoming greater the deeper we went. Suddenly, I stopped, realizing I was near the lake. She loved it there, perhaps she'd gone for another visit.

I sprinted in that direction.

I mind-linked my father. Dad, I'm heading to the lake. See if she ended up there.

I'll head your way, come through the forest instead of the path to see if she came a different way.

Suddenly, I could smell her scent of apple cider. It was still intoxicating even in my state of worry. I continued running until I stopped on the path, frozen in place.

I shifted back and stood on the dirt path, unable to move for a moment, hoping it wasn't her.

Lying on the ground a few yards in front of me was the bloodied body of my mate, naked and muddy.

“Ella!” I ran to her, stopping above her to assess the damage.

She was covered in claw marks and gashes. Her skin was bruised, and the ground beneath her was soaked in blood. Her body was lifeless and cold.

Dad! I yelled through the mind-link. Dad, I found her! She's really bad...

I dropped to my knees, scared to touch her. Seconds later, my father was beside me, letting out a gasp.

“I-I don't think she's...” I couldn't finish the sentence, tears burning my eyes.

“She's not dead,” my father replied.

“If she was, you would have felt it. She can't be...she can't be dead...,” he said, almost as if he was trying to convince himself.

I scooped her into my arms and held her close. My ears perked up when I heard the smallest, faintest sound of her weak heart.

“She’s alive!”

I shifted back to my wolf, and my father placed her on my back before shifting again himself.

We sprinted back through the forest to the pack medical building. I could feel her heartbeat weakening and her breathing lighten.

Terrified I’d lose her before making it back, I ran faster, pleading with her the whole way. Please...please be okay.

## Chapter 34

**ZANE**

Beep... Beep...

I watched as pack doctors rushed around the room, hurrying to save their future luna.

Beep...

I stood in the corner, watching their every move, hoping she would wake.

Beep...

They were cleaning and stitching and hooking her up to machines.

Beep beep beep beep beep...

“Doctor, she’s crashing!”

My eyes widened and my heart sank as I watched the doctors frantically try to save her.

I was ushered out of the room by a nurse and was left standing in the hallway, unable to do anything to help my mate. She was dying there in front of me.

“Zane!”

I snapped my head to the side, my eyes filling with tears as my father pulled me into a hug.

“I-I think I’m going to lose her.”

“She’s strong. She has to make it through this.”

We stood outside the room, our minds jumping to the worst possible conclusions as the room went quiet.

Beep...

I closed my eyes and let out a sigh of relief, my father giving me a reassuring pat on the back.

A few moments later, the doctor exited the room. I involuntarily stiffened, afraid to hear what he had to say.

“Well, as you saw, it was rough in there. We almost lost her. But I think she’ll be okay. She suffered extensive wounds to her neck, shoulders, and abdomen.

“She had massive blood loss and was suffering mildly from exposure after lying naked in the forest for hours. Honestly, I’m amazed she’s alive.”

I exhaled, grateful we had found her when we did. Any later and I might not have gotten there in time.

“When can I see her?”

“She hasn’t woken up yet, and I don’t know how long it will take because of the extent of her injuries. Of course, since she’s a wolf she will heal fairly quickly, but her wounds were very bad.”

“Can I at least sit by her?”

“Of course, Alpha.” The doctor nodded and then walked away, leaving us frozen in the hallway.

I hesitated, afraid of what I was going to see behind that door. My father gripped my shoulders, and we entered her room.

Lying in the bed, small and pale, was my mate. She looked like she was on the verge of death.

I inhaled sharply, trying to summon the images I loved. Her glowing skin, silky chocolate waves, bright eyes, and that smile...

I walked around the bed and sat in a chair beside her.

“Wake up, Ella... I don’t know what I’ll do if I lose you.”

“What even happened?” my father asked, his eyes wandering over her injuries.

“I have no idea.” I shook my head before a scowl spread across it.

“But these look like claw marks from another wolf.”

My father’s brow knotted.

“I was thinking the same thing. But who would dare attack their luna so boldly?”

I grabbed Ella’s hand and kissed it.

“I have no idea. But whoever it was better run fast. When I find them—”

I stopped when a hand was placed on my shoulder.

“Don’t worry about that now. Take care of your woman. I’m going to go tell Sophie what happened now that she’s stable.”

My father left, and I stayed by my mate’s side, holding her hand and praying she would wake up soon.

Sophie burst through the door, followed by Declan and Daniel, tears streaming down her face.

“Ells Bells...”

I jerked my head up to meet her eyes, tears forming in my own.

“Sophie, I—”

Sophie walked to me and embraced me tightly.

“Thank you for finding our girl.” She sat down on the bed and pushed the stray hairs from Ella’s face.

“I don’t understand what happened...,” Declan mumbled as he leaned against the end of the bed, looking at his friend with concern.

I looked up at him.

“I don’t either, but I promise my dad and I will find out.”

Sophie nodded her head before placing a kiss on Ella’s forehead.

My father, Sophie, and Declan took turns sitting with her and trying to convince me to get some rest. But I wasn't going to leave her side. Not until she woke up and until I knew she was okay.

Hours turned into days. Ella still hadn't woken up. The doctors assured us she wasn't in a coma, that for some reason she just wasn't waking up, probably just her body recovering from the shock.

I was becoming a mess. My shirt was wrinkled, my hair unkempt, and my face unshaven. Dark circles formed under my eyes. I hadn't slept properly in days.

The day of the luna ceremony came and went, and I was angry that our day had been taken away from us. I wanted her to be with me. I wanted to hold her, to kiss her.

Once again, morning came, and I had dozed off beside her bed.

"Zane."

It was just a whisper, but it was enough to wake me. My head shot up and my eyes met those bright, beautiful hazel eyes I had wanted to see for so long.

"Ella," I exhaled and smiled.

She smiled sleepily at me before looking around the room.

"What happened? How long was I...?"

"You've been unconscious for almost a week. You were found in the woods. Gashes and claw marks all over you. You were barely alive."

Ella knotted her brow.

"I almost died."

I nodded my head.

"You almost died. If I hadn't gotten there when I did, I don't... I lost my control and choked up, the tears spilling out of me."

Ella rested her hand on my head.

"But you found me. I'm here."

I took her hand and kissed her palm.

"I don't know what I would have done if I had lost you."

Ella smiled warmly at me.

“Come here.”

She patted the bed next to her and I sat beside her, wrapping my arms gently around her and inhaling her scent. It calmed me.

I looked down and met her eyes.

“What happened?”

Ella scowled.

“Mariah.”

I saw red.

“What do you mean, Mariah?”

“I took a run to the lake. I had just gotten out of the water and was sitting at the water’s edge when she came up behind me. She said some awful things...”

Ella trailed off, Mariah’s words echoing in her mind.

“She attacked you?” I questioned, trying to keep my fury at bay.

Ella nodded.

“She shifted and lunged at me. I’ve never been trained, I was always just working in the kitchen. I only knew what my dad had taught me about getting out of a fight.

“It didn’t work, she was more skilled than I was. She was stronger. She bit me and clawed at me and left me for dead.

“I tried to make it back to the pack house but I was so weak, so injured, I couldn’t go any farther and collapsed on the ground.”

Anger flashed through my eyes. I stood and rubbed my hands through my hair before throwing the pitcher of water at the wall. It made Ella flinch, and I turned back to her, taking her hand.

“I’m sorry. I just—I can’t believe this happened. You should have taken me with you.”

“Zane, stop. You and I both know we can’t just follow each other around all day.” Ella rolled her eyes at me sarcastically.

“I’d never get anything done,” I teased before placing a soft kiss on her lips.

Ella scrunched her nose.

“You should go home and shower. You look and smell horrible.”

I laughed for the first time in a week and smiled at her as I left to head back to the packhouse to do as my luna said.

## Chapter 35

### **ELLA**

When we entered the packhouse a few days later, all I could think about was going upstairs and sleeping in my bed.

That hospital bed was horrible, hard, and lumpy. I’d barely gotten any good sleep on it. My wounds were healed completely, and I was glad to be home.

I made my way to the stairs and was about to head up when my feet were swept out from under me, and I was in the strong, muscular arms of my mate.

“Zane, I am perfectly capable of walking!” I hollered as I rolled my eyes.

“Yes, but what fun would that be?” Zane teased as he took me upstairs.

I watched as he walked past my room and entered his.

“Hey, wait! What are you—”

I was interrupted when he dropped me on the bed.

“Zane! I’m not going to just—”

“Nope!” Zane held a hand to my mouth.

“No argument. You’re staying in here from now on. I already took the liberty of having your things moved in here.”

I looked around to see my belongings placed around the room and what I assumed were my clothes in the closet.

I scowled at my mate.

“Zane Davis, just because you are an alpha doesn’t mean you get to just decide I’m staying with you.”

“True, but Ella, I want you near me. I’m not letting you out of my sight again.”

I rolled my eyes.

“Fine.”

Zane smiled and crawled onto the bed, his movements acting as though he was stalking his prey.

I gave him a sarcastic glare.

“What are you doing?”

Zane pounced on me, and I squealed as he wrapped his arms around me and entangled our limbs.

He kissed me on the forehead, on the cheeks, and on the nose, before finally resting his lips on mine. I inhaled his scent and leaned into his kiss.

It started gentle, then quickened with more passion, as though he was making up for the last week. He rolled on top of me, his body pressed to mine as his hands wandered my skin.

“My mate,” he whispered as he kissed me deeply.

I smiled, feeling loved and wanted by my mate. But at the back of my mind, Mariah’s words still rang in my head.

...you are weak... you should have left him alone... you are no luna... little omega...

I spent the night wrapped in Zane’s arms, enjoying his warmth.

I woke in the morning to find myself alone. I got out of bed and took a long, hot shower, hoping to clean off the last two weeks of chaos.

I dressed in leggings and a loose T-shirt and made my way downstairs. As I entered the kitchen, I was embraced by my mom.

“I’m still so glad you’re okay,” my mom said as she released me. I sat down at the island and watched the cooks work on breakfast.

When they were done, my mom walked over, wiping her hands on her apron.

“So, how are you?”

I shrugged.

"I'm okay."

Sophie wrinkled her brow.

"Ella Marie Matthews, I've known you long enough to know when you're not okay. Spill it."

I let out a sigh.

"It's just something Mariah said to me. It bothered me, that's all."

"What did she say?" Sophie asked as she sat down beside me.

I lowered my head.

"She...she said I was weak, that I shouldn't be with him, that I'm not good enough to be luna."

I heard my mom exhale slowly.

"Do you believe her?"

"Well, look what she did to me! I couldn't even defend myself."

Sophie shook her head.

"But you were never trained like she was. You can't use that excuse."

She had a point.

"That's true. Do you think I'll be an okay luna?"

My mother smiled.

"Sweetheart, I think you're going to make an amazing luna. You are strong and kind and good-hearted. Plus, you can hold your ground against Zane and keep him in line."

I laughed.

"Sure! Don't let Zane hear you say that!"

"Hear you say what?" He walked up from behind us and wrapped his arms around me.

We both laughed.

"Nothing."

Zane gave me a peck on the cheek and stood beside me.

"I need you to stay near me today."

I narrowed my eyes at him.

"Why?"

"What do you mean why? Don't you want to spend time with me?" Zane teased.

"You know what I mean, Zane." I rolled my eyes at him, but I knew he had a reason.

"We can't find Mariah." Zane shook his head, anger flashing through his eyes.

"It seems that when she heard you had survived, she took off. We don't know where, so until then, you're stuck with me."

I felt fear creep up on me again.

"Okay..."

Zane cupped my face.

"Don't worry, Ells, we'll catch her. She will face the consequences of her actions."

Sophie interrupted.

"What exactly are the consequences?"

"Well..." Zane hesitated, not knowing how to respond.

Suddenly, Alpha Daniel appeared next to us.

"The best-case scenario is she will be exiled from the pack. But usually, the punishment for killing a member of your own pack is execution. Seeing as she was only able to commit attempted murder, it might be less. But Ella is luna-to-be. So I don't know, it's complicated. We'll probably have to hold a pack council."

Zane nodded at his father, and I gulped. I hated Mariah. I hated her for the years of emotional abuse, I hated her for belittling me, for treating me like a slave.

I hated her for taking Zane away and convincing him to reject me, and I hated her for attacking me. But I wasn't sure I thought Mariah should die.