

Two Years Gone Novel

Chapter 36

ELLA

I spent the day following Zane around the pack grounds. He had meetings with his father in the offices, then he had to check on the construction of some new pack member homes.

After lunch, I followed Zane to the training grounds where he had to train with and observe the pack warriors and protectors.

I sat on a bench, watching with wide eyes as my very shirtless and very sweaty mate fought against several pack members in the training field.

I was in awe, and I couldn't keep my eyes off him. He was freaking hot and I was getting warm just watching him.

My thoughts were interrupted when Alpha Daniel sat down beside me.

"He's a good fighter," he remarked as we watched the men fight.

"He is," I replied. We sat in silence for a moment before I turned to him.

"Alpha?"

"Hmm?" He looked down to meet my eyes.

"Would you train me?"

Alpha Daniel tried to hide the shock on his face, but he wasn't very successful.

"You want to train?"

"I'm terrified that what happened in the woods might not be the last time. I don't want to ever be in that position again. Will you teach me?" I asked.

Alpha Daniel smiled warmly.

"I would be honored."

I smiled before standing up.

“Can you tell Zane I’m back at the packhouse?”

Daniel nodded.

“We’ll start first thing tomorrow morning.”

I entered the packhouse, excited for my new adventure. I knew I’d enjoy learning to fight, to protect myself.

As I entered the kitchen, I was pulled back and into the back hallway by strong familiar arms.

“I thought you were supposed to stay with me,” Zane whispered.

I inhaled sharply as the closeness of our bodies registered. He was still shirtless, sweat glistening across his chest and hard abs. I tried to keep my mind out of the gutter but wasn’t successful.

My mind was brought back when I heard Zane growl, “Ella.”

“Hmm?” I looked up to meet his eyes, which had begun to darken.

“I can smell your desire. You’re going to drive me crazy.”

I gulped.

“Desire? Gosh, the only thing I desire is for you to take a shower. Nasty man smell.” I waved my hand in front of my nose with a coy smile.

Zane smirked, resting his hands on my hips.

“You could always come help me.”

“Oh darn, I’ve already showered today,” I replied innocently, enjoying teasing him a little too much.

Zane growled before brushing his lips against mine. He turned and walked up the stairs, leaving me a puddle of mush in the hallway.

That evening, Zane and I turned in for bed. I hadn’t told Zane about my training session with his father tomorrow. I wanted it to be a surprise.

And I knew that if he knew about it, he’d want to be there, and I would be too self-conscious to learn in front of him like that.

Zane entered the room and made his way to the closet, walking out with a garment bag.

“So I have a request for you...”

“Okay?” I looked at him skeptically.

“You can say no. But I thought I’d ask.” Zane unzipped the garment bag to reveal a beautiful white dress.

“This was the dress my mom wore to her luna ceremony. I thought you might like to wear it.”

I smiled, tears welling in my eyes.

“Zane, I would love to wear it. It’s beautiful. Thank you!” I threw my arms around him and kissed his cheek.

We only had one more week until the ceremony. I was sad it had been postponed, but now that it was getting closer, I was excited, ready to take my place beside my mate.

The next morning, I woke and quickly got dressed. I put on some athletic leggings and a sports bra under a loose tank along with some running shoes.

I pulled my long chocolate waves into a French braid to keep it out of my face and made my way downstairs, grabbing a bottle of water and waiting out front for Alpha Daniel.

After a few minutes, he stepped outside, smiling.

“Ready?”

“Ready,” I replied, my voice full of determination.

As we walked down the hill, Daniel explained our plan for the morning.

“Okay, so we’re going to do some warm-ups first. Most of training and fighting is building up your endurance. You especially need that now since you’re recovering from injuries.

“We’ll run some laps and do some stretches and basic drills. Then we’ll work on hand-to-hand combat skills. Sound good?”

I shrugged.

“Sounds good to me. I’ll try and do whatever you want me to.”

I worked hard through the drills and stretches, determined to gain my strength back and then some. I wanted to die, and my lungs were on fire, but I knew I needed to do this.

I was determined to prove Mariah wrong. After the drills, we began training.

He showed me basic skills like punching and kicking, and I was proud when he was surprised at the strength of my hits.

“You’ve got a good arm on you!” he said as he shook the sting from his hand.

I smiled, and we danced around each other, jabbing and punching.

As wolves, we were naturally good at fighting, but some were better skilled, and I knew I’d have to work hard to catch up to the other wolves who had been training for years.

After our workout, we made our way back up the hill, sweating and laughing at a joke Daniel had made about my girly kicks.

“There you two are!” Zane growled from the top of the stairs.

“Good morning, Zane.” I smiled warmly, only to be met with a glare.

“Where the hell were you guys? I’ve been looking everywhere.”

Daniel laughed.

“Zane, we were just—” He was interrupted by my elbow jabbing his side.

I gave him a look before turning to Zane.

“We went for a run.”

Zane scowled, and I walked to him and wrapped my arms around him, knowing it would calm him down.

“Thanks for the run, Ella!” Daniel hollered as he made his way upstairs to shower and change.

“You should have told me! I would have gone with you.”

I shrugged.

“You were tired, and your dad wanted to go for a run.”

I felt bad lying to him, but I really wanted my training to be a surprise. Tomorrow, Daniel was going to start teaching me to fight in my wolf form, and I wanted to be able to show Zane.

"I need to shower. See you at breakfast?" I kissed him on the cheek before making my way upstairs.

Chapter 37

ZANE

Ella had been distant since returning home from the hospital, especially over the last few days. She was always going off somewhere and keeping secrets. I was starting to worry.

I thought she had just needed some space, but this morning she was gone again before I got up.

I quickly got up and looked around the pack house for her. I couldn't find her anywhere.

It made me even more upset that she was leaving the pack house by herself, especially with Mariah still on the loose.

When I walked back into our room, I was surprised to hear the shower running. Somehow, she had made it upstairs without me noticing. I entered the bathroom, ready to let out my anger.

"Ella!"

Ella turned to me, shock on her face.

"Zane! Get out!" She attempted to cover herself, but the glass shower doors couldn't conceal much.

My eyes wandered over her for a moment before I realized what I was doing and stomped out of the bathroom.

Ella stormed out of the bathroom as I sat down on the bed.

"What the hell, Zane?"

"Where were you?!"

"I was just out on the pack grounds. What is going on?" she yelled.

"What's going on?" I stood, my voice booming.

"What's going on is you don't seem to care about your safety! Mariah is still out there and you're wandering out by yourself in the early morning!"

Ella smirked.

“Who said I’m alone?”

SHE WAS WITH ANOTHER WOLF? KILL HIM! my wolf yelled in my head.

Fury flashed through my eyes, and I lunged toward her.

“Are you saying you were with someone else?”

I stood close to her, my jealousy burning as I looked into her bright hazel eyes that for now, only held defiance.

“As a matter of fact, I was. Do you really think I’d just go walking around by myself? Chill, Zane!” Ella scowled at me.

“Who the hell was he? I’ll rip his damn head off!” I boomed.

“I was with your dad, you idiot!” Ella glared up at me.

I turned and attempted to storm out of the room. I needed to clear my head.

I was beyond angry at her, and I knew I’d say something I regretted if I kept going. But I was stopped when Ella grabbed my arm.

“Zane, would you just sit down?” Ella asked softly.

“I have work to do.”

“You have five minutes. Sit down,” Ella said again, almost begging.

I exhaled and sat on the bed.

Ella stood between my legs and cupped my face in her hands.

“Zane, I was with your dad. I’ve been with your dad every morning for the last few days.”

I continued to glare, my anger still burning.

“He’s been training me.” Ella straightened herself.

“He’s been what?” I finally spoke; the shock in my voice was loud.

“He’s been training me. How to fight, how to protect myself.”

“You don’t need to do that. I can protect you,” I said quietly.

Ella smiled and ran her thumb along my cheek.

“Zane, I know you can protect me, but I also know that you can’t always be there. I don’t want what happened in the forest to ever happen again.”

I lowered my head and let out a deep breath.

“I thought you were seeing someone else. I didn’t trust you. I’m sorry.”

Ella laughed.

“You should be! You totally ruined the surprise!” I snapped my head up with a look of confusion as Ella continued, “I wanted to learn and then surprise you with my mad skills!”

I laughed and shook my head before pulling her close to me. She wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed my forehead.

Only then did I notice she was still standing there in nothing but a towel. A few stray drops of water glistened on her shoulders, and I felt myself respond to her.

I was about to lean in and kiss her when she stepped away with a flirty smile on her face. I let out a groan before lying back on the bed. She knew exactly what she was doing.

I went downstairs to let her change in peace and to talk to my dad.

“I can’t believe you lied to me!” I hollered sarcastically as I walked into my father’s office.

My dad leaned back in his chair and let out a laugh: “She told you, eh? Way to ruin the surprise!”

I laughed.

“That’s what she said. So how is she doing?”

My dad leaned forward, resting his elbows on his desk.

“I’ve honestly never seen someone catch on so quickly. Even you. She’s a warrior at heart. I think she’s determined to make sure she never has to go through that again.”

I nodded.

“She said that too. I’m glad she’s picking it up.”

Dad laughed, running his hands through his hair.

“That girl is a fighter.”

“Don’t I know it.” I rolled my eyes.

“She keeps me on my toes.”

“The best ones always do,” Daniel smiled warmly.

I could tell he was thinking of his mate, my mother. She had been gone for almost ten years, but the hole she left in my father was massive. When she died, it all but ripped him in two.

Dad snapped his head up.

“So...breakfast?”

I nodded and we made our way to the kitchen.

“Morning, Sophie,” we both chimed as we entered.

“Morning Alpha Daniel, Alpha Zane.” She smiled at us warmly.

“Where’s Ella?” I looked around the common area curiously.

“She ran to the pantry for me. She’ll be back in a minute,” Sophie replied.

“How is she doing?”

“She seems to be doing well.”

“That’s good, I know what Mariah said had really gotten to her.”

I looked at her curiously.

“What do you mean?”

“Oh...” Sophie’s eyes widened when she realized she had stepped in it.

“Well, she just...”

We both stood taller, projecting our alpha auras.

“Sophie?”

Sophie lowered her head and told us what Mariah had said in the woods that day. My father and I stood in shock, speechless even as Ella entered the kitchen.

“Good morning, all!” She smiled, handing the box of extra plates to her mother.

I gave her a small smile. How am I going to make that up to her? How am I going to convince her she’s perfect? I thought to myself as I watched her sway through the kitchen.

Chapter 38

ELLA

Today. The luna ceremony was today. I was a bundle of nerves but excited at the same time.

I could feel the mate pull getting stronger as the full moon approached, and I couldn’t wait to officially be the pack luna.

“Good morning,” Zane mumbled, still half asleep. I smiled at him, sleep still trying to keep us.

“Good morning.”

“Are you ready for tonight?”

I wiggled in the bed.

“I am. I’m ready to be luna, to be useful.”

Zane pulled me close to him, our foreheads touching.

“You’ve always been useful, I’ve never met anyone who works as hard as you. And you’re my luna.”

Zane reached up and kissed my forehead before climbing out of bed. I couldn’t tell if he could smell my arousal, but that man was now all I could think about.

I knew that tonight was the night. I was ready to give all of myself to him.

Zane threw on some shorts and a T-shirt before rolling back onto the bed. I let out a squeal as he rolled on top of me.

He looked down at me and pushed some hair out of my face. His eyes went dark for a second before he took back control.

“I’ll be back in a bit. Need to run down to the training grounds to inspect the warriors. I’ll see you at breakfast.” He rolled off me and walked out the door.

I lay there for a minute, trying to calm myself. If he hadn't smelled it before, he sure as hell smelled it now. His wolf was fighting to come out, and mine was having a hard time as well.

I shook my head, trying to clear my mind of him and his body above me.

I hopped up and showered before changing into some leggings and a loose tee. I would be getting ready later that day, and I had so many things to do before then.

"Good morning, Luna!" Sophie sang as I entered the kitchen.

I laughed.

"I'm not Luna yet."

"But it's tonight, so it's pretty much the same thing," my mother teased before making her way to the dining table.

I sat down across from my mother and began to eat.

"So, I'm thinking we have a girls' day," Sophie suggested between bites.

I liked that thought. I'd never really had one. The closest I came was having my mom paint my toes in our little cabin at night before bed.

I smiled.

"I'd like that."

My mother nodded.

"It's decided, then!"

"What's decided?" I turned to the sound of my mate's warm voice.

"Ella and I are having a girls' day. We're going to pamper ourselves and make ourselves all pretty for the ceremony tonight," Sophie responded happily.

"You don't need a girls' day for that. You're already beautiful," Zane replied, pouring on the charm.

I laughed.

"Smooth."

"I thought so," Zane joked.

The day went by quickly with pedicures and manicures and facials and body scrubs. We had our hair and makeup done, and I had to admit I looked pretty amazing.

They had curled my long brown hair and French braided a crown around my head. It was decorated with little white flowers and pearls.

My makeup was light and natural-looking except for my eyes. I had a dramatic nude smokey eye that emphasized their hazel color.

It was getting closer to midnight and my nervousness had crept up on me. I stood in front of the mirror in Zane's mother's dress and was amazed at how good I looked.

My mother walked in from the bathroom after getting her dress on and stopped to stare at me with tears in her eyes.

"Ella! You look beautiful!" Sophie gave me a tight hug.

"You ready?"

I gave a nervous smile.

"Ready as I'll ever be."

My mother laughed and hooked her arm in mine. We made it down the stairs and out to the front porch where Alpha Daniel was waiting with tears in his eyes at the sight of me in his mate's dress.

Alpha Daniel took my hand and helped me down the hill.

"You really do look amazing, my girl. I'm so glad Zane came to his senses."

I smiled up at Daniel.

"Thank you, I'm glad he did too."

"You're going to make a wonderful luna," he reassured me.

"I hope I don't disappoint everyone. I'm just a little omega."

"A luna can come from anywhere. Just because you were an omega, doesn't mean you aren't strong." He patted my hand and I looked up at where we had stopped.

They had decorated the outdoor amphitheater with thousands of little lights. A warm glow fell over the whole area, and I was in awe.

The whole pack stood to attention as we entered. Zane was at the bottom of the hill on the stage, waiting for me.

Daniel walked me up to the stage and kissed my hand.

“Luna.” I gave him a warm smile before making my way up onto the stage.

I looked up at Zane. He was in an all-black suit, perfectly tailored to him. He looked amazing, and if I wasn’t so nervous, I would jump on him right here and now.

As I stepped onto the stage, Zane took my hand, his warmth radiating through me.

Zane turned to face the pack.

“Members of the Green Ridge Pack! We are here tonight to welcome Ella Matthews, mate to the alpha, and new luna to the pack.”

Zane turned to me, the luna dagger in his hand.

“Do you promise to obey and uphold pack law?”

“I do.”

“Do you promise to act as a partner to the alpha in all things pack-related and work to support and sustain the Green Ridge Pack?”

“I do.”

“Do you promise to be fair in judgment and use your position as luna to help your pack?”

“I do.”

Zane then took the dagger and made a slice in my palm before doing the same to himself. He clasped our hands together, and I immediately felt the whole pack surge within me.

I felt the mind-link form and was overwhelmed by the change.

Zane stood behind me and spoke again.

“With this mark, I make you my mate and official luna of the Green Ridge Pack.”

He pushed my hair to the side and whispered in my ear.

"This is going to hurt for a second." His lips brushed down my neck and to the spot on my shoulder he had been waiting to mark.

He bit down, his teeth breaking my skin. I tensed at the pain, but it was quickly replaced with warmth and pleasure.

Zane licked the stray blood away from my already-healing mark and then stepped out from behind me.

"Welcome, Luna Ella!"

The entire pack echoed back, "Welcome, Luna Ella!" before erupting into applause.

I beamed. This moment was perfect.

Chapter 39

ZANE

I watched Ella from across the field. She was surrounded by pack members, smiling brightly and chatting.

I hadn't heard a word anyone in my own conversation had said. I was too mesmerized by the beautiful woman before me.

When I saw her at the top of the hill earlier, her white dress and long hair flowing in the breeze, it was enough to knock a man out.

And when she stepped up onto the stage, I could smell her arousal. She was as attracted to me as I was to her. She was absolutely stunning, and I couldn't keep my eyes off her.

Occasionally, she would catch my gaze and smile warmly at me. I excused myself from my group and made my way over to her.

"Do you all mind if I steal my luna away from you?" The pack members nodded, and I took her hand, walking her back up the hill.

"Are you sure we can leave?" Ella asked, looking back at the group.

"I'm an alpha, I'm allowed to do whatever I want," I teased, and I enjoyed the smirk I received from Ella. We walked hand in hand back to the packhouse and up the stairs.

When we entered the bedroom, I shut the door and clicked the lock. I was not having any interruptions tonight as I worshipped my luna.

I chuckled as I walked over to Ella, watching her struggle to get her dress unzipped from behind.

“Let me,” I said quietly. I unzipped her dress and placed my hands on her shoulders, slowly removing the sleeves and letting the dress fall.

I wrapped my arms around her waist as she closed her eyes and leaned into my chest.

“My luna...,” I whispered as I kissed her shoulder above her mark and let my lips travel up her neck.

Ella let out a quiet moan as I let my hands wander her body before letting them rest on her hips. Ella turned around and kissed me gently, her warm lips sending sparks through my body.

She slowly unbuttoned my shirt, her fingers brushing my skin as we made our way down. She pushed my shirt back, and I shrugged it off my shoulders.

I picked her up and walked her to the bed, gently laying her down before moving above her. Ella moaned as I kissed and licked at her mark, my lips making their way down her body.

I stopped at her breast, taking each into my mouth before kissing down her stomach.

I let my tongue tease her outer walls, making her moan again before sucking her bud and moving my fingers inside her.

She arched her back in pleasure as I took my fingers in and out, the pressure building up. She released, calling out my name. It drove me wild.

I removed my pants and boxers before moving back up her body, attempting to kiss every inch of her.

“Zane...,” she moaned as I crushed my lips to hers, our tongues taking in the taste of each other. I teased her again with my tip and felt her shudder in anticipation.

“I want all of you,” I whispered in her ear, my voice husky with desire.

“Take all of me,” she whispered back.

I pushed myself into her, her body tight and wet. She moaned, digging her fingers into my back. I kissed her with fervor, wanting to take in every second.

I moved above her, thrusting myself in and out as we both felt the pleasure building. I could feel myself on the edge, and I bit down on her mark, sending pleasure through Ella’s body.

She pulled me to her, and as I was about to explode, she marked me, the small pinch of pain overwhelmed by intense pleasure. I released, pleasure spilling out of me.

We lay together, Ella's head resting on my chest as I rubbed little circles on her arm.

In the morning, I woke up, Ella still in my arms. I nuzzled my face into the crook of her neck and inhaled her scent.

She stirred in my arms and met my eyes with a smile.

"Good morning, Luna," I whispered.

"Good morning, Alpha." She smiled before kissing my lips lightly.

"What are you doing this morning?" I asked, brushing my lips along her cheek.

"Sleeping," she giggled.

"Sounds like a plan to me." I smiled as I pulled her closer and rolled above her. She let out a laugh as I planted kisses all over her face.

"I love you, Ella." I was surprised I had said it. I'd been thinking it for weeks but had been too nervous to say it out loud. But at this moment, I wanted her to know it.

Ella smiled up at me and cupped my cheek with her hand.

"I love you too, Zane."

Chapter 40

ELLA

Bliss. That was the only word I could think of to describe how I felt. I lay in bed, warm and relaxed as I cuddled myself close to my mate.

The last few months had been a whirlwind of fights, drama, and pain, but now I was content. He loved me. I smiled as I felt my wolf purr at the thought.

"He loves us," I murmured.

Zane stirred, and I scrunched my nose at him when he leaned over and kissed my cheek.

"Good morning, Luna," he whispered.

“Good morning,” I smiled brightly. And then my bliss was replaced by panic. I was luna. I had no idea how to be luna. I had no idea what to do, how to plan events or help out in meetings.

I knew how to cook. That was it.

As if he sensed my panic, Zane sat up in bed and ran a hand through my hair.

“You’re going to be an amazing luna.”

“How do you know that?!” I replied, my fear evident in my voice.

“Because I know you.” Zane smiled at me and kissed my forehead before getting out of bed.

“But I don’t know the first thing about being a luna.”

Zane turned with a smirk.

“Well, then you should probably get ready for the day and come to the office with me.”

I rolled my eyes at his attitude before hopping out of bed and following him to the bathroom. We showered together, comfortable enough to shave and wash without being self-conscious.

When we made our way down to breakfast, Zane kissed my palm before walking off to speak to his beta.

“Good morning, Luna.” My mother smiled, handing me a plate.

I chuckled.

“I’m pretty sure of all the people here, you have the most right to just call me Ella.”

“Oh, but it’s so fun to call you Luna.” She winked before handing plates to the people behind me.

“Good morning, Luna!” the pack members in the dining hall all hollered.

“Good morning!” I sang, a little self-conscious of all the attention, but glad they felt comfortable enough to speak to me.

I sat beside Zane and handed him a plate of food before digging into my breakfast. He rested a hand on my thigh as he continued speaking to pack members about random bits of business.

“You know you could wait until after breakfast before talking shop,” I teased.

“Yes, my luna.” Zane winked.

“You hear that, boys? No more shop talk at the breakfast table, luna’s orders.”

I blushed before nudging his arm.

“If I didn’t know better, I’d think you were teasing me, Zane Davis.”

“Oh, I was one hundred percent teasing you, Ella Davis.”

I smiled, savoring the way my new name sounded rolling off his lips. I couldn’t help but lean in and give him a soft kiss on the lips.

Once again, whistles sounded from random pack members, but I didn’t care this time. I was going to kiss my love.

Zane pulled away, breathless.

“Goodness, what was that for?”

I shrugged before taking another bite of my breakfast. When we made it to the office, Zane had a meeting with border security before we could sit down and talk about my duties.

I sat on the couch, listening to their meeting, and was impressed by the way Zane handled himself as alpha. He was so sexy when he was in charge like that...

My reverie was interrupted by a cough. I looked up to see all the men in the room staring at me.

“What?” I asked innocently, a bit of sass coming off the end of it.

“Well, gentlemen, I think that’s the end of it,” Zane said, his eyes still on me.

“Update the patrol logs and schedules and keep doing what you’re doing. Thank you.”

Zane showed them out before his head snapped to me, and his eyes darkened.

I sat up straight, confused at what was going on.

“Ella.”

“Zane?”

Zane stepped forward before kneeling on the ground before me.

“You can’t do that anymore.”

“Do what? I’ve literally been sitting here doing nothing,” I replied, not understanding why I was in trouble.

“Apparently, your mind wasn’t doing nothing. The entire room could smell your arousal.”

I gasped, my hands flew up to my mouth in shock and embarrassment.

“Oh my gosh.”

Zane rubbed his hands on my thighs, his thumbs brushing the inside of my thigh sensually. I inhaled sharply at his touch.

“Zane, we have things to do...,” I whispered.

“This one’s on you, all I can smell now is you.” He was fighting for control, and I could feel myself heat up.

Zane leaned in to kiss me, his lips about to touch mine when there was a knock at the door.

Zane lowered his head and groaned before standing up and adjusting himself.

I let out a deep breath, fanning myself with my hand. Zane gave me a smile before opening the door.

“Hey!” Alpha Daniel strolled in, unaware of what had almost happened until making it into the room and scrunching his nose.

“Gosh, it smells like sex in here!”

I gasped in embarrassment again, hiding my face in my hands. Zane laughed before smacking his dad on the back.

Alpha Daniel shook his head with a smirk on his face, “Just here for the meeting! Sorry to interrupt—”

“No! You didn’t interrupt anything!” I replied quickly, my embarrassment still fresh.

Zane gave me a wide-eyed grin before he sat down at his desk, and we began to go over my possible duties.

I turned to Daniel.

“What did your wife do? What were her duties?”

“She was mostly in charge of the pack house. She would go over menu plans and food orders with your mom, plan the pack meetings, events, and ceremonies, and make sure everyone was taken care of.”

I smiled.

“I can do that.”

Zane leaned back in his chair.

“I wouldn’t mind if you helped with administrative duties as well. Filing and such. It would help a lot; the guys don’t seem to be very good at organizing.”

I squirmed a bit.

“I don’t know how good I’d be at that.”

“Don’t worry, hun, it’s a learning process. You aren’t expected to be perfect at this immediately,” Alpha Daniel reassured me with a squeeze of my hand.

“Okay. Let’s do this then,” I said, determined to make them proud.